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NATURE, STATUS AND SCOPE OF MANPOWER
AND EMPLOYMENT PLANNING PROCESSES IN AFRICA

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The Nature, Status and Scope of Manpower and Employment Planning Processes in Africa

I Introduction and Summary

1. Among the major challenges faced by African Governments right after gaining political independence was the challenge to gain and retain economic independence. The task of gaining economic independence became more difficult throughout the 1970s, and unmanageable during the first half of the 1980s. Several analysis of economic development trends in Africa during those years show that the performance of African economies, by and large, had been sluggish. Structural imbalances; widespread low level productivity; heavy dependence of local production on imports; failure to diversify into new types of exports; and the absence of domestic linkages have all been identified by African governments as existing elements that characterize most African economies _1/

2. Worst still and as pointed out by the ECA, by the first half of 1980, was a difficult time for Africa. The agriculture sector was severely hit by drought, desertification, and low productivity causing major food shortage; and a great dependence on food aid. The industrial sector on the other hand reached an undesirable state of decay due primarily to the slow pace of investment flow; a rapid depreciation on existing capital goods and infrastructure; and the lack of adequate indigenous entrepreneurs and skilled managerial manpower. On the Social front, imbalances had developed between the number and types of available jobs and job seekers; between population growth and resource accumulation and distribution; and between social norms, political desires and production patterns _2/ These were indeed very difficult times for development managers in Africa.

3. Among the major contributing factors to this state of sluggishness are: (i) the inadequacy and poor condition of Africa's transport and communication infrastructure; (ii) Africa's incapability to adequately exploit, process and utilize, in an integrated manner, her vast reserves of natural resources, and (iii) a diminishing trend in capital growth with a growing financial leakage both of which give rise to huge payment deficits and the accumulation of foreign debt. _3/ A careful analysis of these contributing factors raises a fundamental question on the appropriateness of the regions policies, strategies, programmes and attitude toward the development and utilization of its vast human resources potentials for development.

---_1/"Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis"; OAU/ECM/2XV/Rev.2, E/ECA/ECM.1/1./Rev.1, 1986.

_2/"Policies and Strategies for Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa in View of Africa's Long-term Development Challenges and Strategies"; E/ECA/AAU/ED/66/2, p.1.

_3/Ibid; p.5.

4. This notwithstanding, a number of African Governments have instituted actions, ranging from the creation of ministries, departments or units for dealing with human resources management to the conduct of reviews and studies on the status of human resources in their respective countries, and the formulation of regional strategies in their search of optimum ways of ensuring an efficient human resources development and utilization process so as to realize their desire for economic recovery and development. While these efforts deserve to be commended, most of them fall short of the required orientation, framework and support that could ensure a more permanent solution to the present low level contribution that is being made by human resources managers to Africa's economic growth and development endeavours.

5. The objective of this report therefore, is to review the nature and status of these efforts particularly as they relate to human resources planning activities and programmes in Africa at the macro-level; and to highlight their scope for future action with the view to assisting member States in their efforts to place the human factor in its rightful cell within their respective economic and social recovery and self-sustained development strategy. It is accordingly divided into four sections in addition to the introduction.

6. Section one traces the background and establishes the need for a comprehensive human resources planning subsystem within the context and framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, (LPA), Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, (APPER), and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD). It points out that the achievement of a breakthrough in structural transformation as desired by these global strategies, would require adequate investments in human resources development and programming, effective organization and development management within the prospects of African long-term development challenges and changing priorities. The section argues that such an investment should be done with the aim of ensuring an integrated process and machinery both comprehensive in nature, approach and scope with the sole objective of fostering Africa's long-term economic and social development.

7. The second section gives a "bird's eye view" of the general nature of human resources planning and programming in Africa. It is known that considerable efforts have been made during the last five years by Member States' Governments to strengthen national, subregional and regional human resources planning and programming institutions. However, it is pointed out that problems associated with data collection, processing and analysis; and those associated with policy formulation and administration have seriously constrained the achievements of these efforts. There are institutional and technical weaknesses in the data gathering process. For example difficulties exist in identifying the type of required data; conceptualizing and finding operational definition for basic labour force and labour market concepts such

as employment, unemployment, underemployment, productivity, work, etc. and conceiving, planning, designing, manpower conducting and processing surveys. As such, the section calls for the development of requisite institutional and staffing capabilities to deal with these pressing problems, if the process of human resources planning is to be made effective.

8. On the question of policy formulation and administration, the section recognizes the conscious efforts that are being made by Member States towards the adoption of policy packages and argues that more work is still to be desired particularly for developing and operationalizing a systematic process through which meaningful human resources policies ought to be determined and harmonized with other developmental policies. In looking at the nature of the problem, the section points out that the African region on the whole, suffers from a state of poor management and poor policy planning due primarily to the disintegrated and unsystematic approach used for policy formulation and administration. The result of this has not only constrained manpower development and utilization planning and programming in Africa, but has also made mockery of socio-economic development planning in many African countries. Two major conclusions are drawn in the section. First, African Governments will have to ensure that human resources policy packages contain an outline of goals, and objectives that are in line with national development goals and objectives. Secondly, national manpower policies need to be re-enforced by clear statements on the steps, strategies and techniques for initiating and implementing human resources management activities.

9. Section three reviews the structure and effectiveness of national institutional arrangements for human resources planning in, and the type and nature of human resources planning activities undertaken by a few selected Member States in an attempt to describe the status of manpower and employment planning processes in Africa. The review shows that for the most part, Member States have made modest gains towards evolving an institutional framework for strengthening their respective capabilities for human resources planning, and have undertaken a number of associated activities in the form of policy revision and reforms, training workshops/seminars/conferences, studies and surveys. What is therefore suggested in the section is that such efforts would need to be integrated, intensified and sustained on a systematic basis within the context of national development during and beyond the economic recovery period as envisaged by both APPER and UN-PAAERD.

10. A number of steps to be taken at the national level to broaden the nature and scope of manpower and employment planning in Africa, and to improve the status and effectiveness of the process for enhancing and sustaining Africa's economic recovery and development, are suggested in the last section. No doubt these steps would need maximum investments and commitments to human resources management in the years ahead with national

governments, the private sector and the donor community playing their respective roles actively.

II Overview and Background to the Need for Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa

11. In addition to the many individual initiatives taken over the years, African Governments have collectively embarked upon a serious search for measures and strategies that would meet the challenge of development particularly since the early 1970s

12. In 1971, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted Resolution 218(X) in respect of Africa's economic development strategy for the 1970s. This initiative was strengthened when, in 1973, African Heads of State and Government adopted the "Declaration on Cooperation, Development and Economic Independence" during the 10th Ordinary Session of the OAU. Four years later, in the continued search for economic independence, the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the Revised Framework of Principles for the New International Economic Order in Africa which was submitted to them by the ECA Executive Committee.

13. To focus these and other efforts, a colloquium was organized in Monrovia (Liberia) early 1977 to discuss Africa's development prospects and economic growth up to the Year 2000. This was followed immediately by the 5th meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic planning held in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco). The meeting adopted Resolution 332(XIV) on Africa's development strategy which was subsequently adopted by the 16th Assembly of African Heads of State and Government in July 1977 in Monrovia, and became known as the "Monrovia Declaration and Commitment." Significantly, the Monrovia Declaration laid down the two basic foundations of "self-reliance" and "self-sustainment" as Africa's Long-term strategy towards economic independence. In 1980, elements of the Monrovia Declaration were translated into concrete action-oriented sectoral and inter-sectoral development proposals and strategies by African Heads of State and Government when they met in Lagos, Nigeria, and emerged with the "Lagos Plan of Action" (LPA) and the "Final Act of Lagos" (FAL).

14. The LPA elaborates those actions needed for Africa to achieve "ownership and mastery" of major production factors. Three specific actions that have far reaching implications for the establishment and operation of requisite human resources development and utilization planning and programming processes in Member States are: (i) the establishment and implementation of large-scale and long-term human resources development programmes; (ii) strengthening existing subregional and regional institutions for training and research; and (iii) development of science and technology within the context of overall national development

plans. In this connexion the plan specifically called for the 4/ In this connexion, the plan specifically called for the integration and consolidation of manpower planning and programming functions in a coherent institutional framework. It was indeed felt and emphasized in the LPA that human resources being Africa's greatest asset, their full mobilization and effective utilization should be a major instrument of sustaining self-reliant development.

15. The severe economic conditions and social decline which reached their apex by 1984 seriously frustrated African Government's efforts to achieve these and other lofty objectives of the LPA. Africa's response was a renewed commitment made towards finding suitable and lasting solutions to the regions development problems.

16. Following a series of successive meetings by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the OAU Ministerial Council 5/ the 21st Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU identified and decided on a set of short- and medium-term priorities required to revive the African economy and lay the necessary foundation for durable structural changes, national and collective self-reliance and sustained growth and development during the period 1986-1990. This led to the adoption of a set of measures as Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER). The corresponding commitment was drawn up in an analytical document entitled Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis 6/ which was adopted by the First Extraordinary Session of ECA's Conference of Ministers, and latter by the Council of Ministers of the OAU at its 15th Ordinary Session in March 1986. On the basis of Africa's Submission the 13th Special Session of the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD) 7/

17. Both action programmes addressed themselves principally to achieving a breakthrough in structural transformation by placing greater emphasis on food and agriculture, industry, human resources, science and technology, transport and communications and trade and finance. Needless to say, the achievement of this breakthrough would, to a larger extent, require adequate investments in human resources development at all levels particularly for third level and vocational education. Substantial inputs of

4/ "Implications and Guidelines to the Implementation of the Human Resources Development and Utilization Programme of the LPA, ECA document, ST/ECA/PAMM/HRP/5/31, pp. 3-4; 1981

5/ For a detailed elaboration of these meetings, see "The African Response: from the LPA to the 13th Special Session of the UN General Assembly" Rasheed and Sarr; ECA/CEPAD/87/14, Addis, pp. 11-16.

6/ See OAU/ECM/XXV/Rev.2; ECA/ECM.1/1/Rev.2, March 1986.

7/ A/RES/5-13/2, 13 June 1986.

trained manpower, skilled and semi-skilled operatives, technical personnel, supervisory and managerial personnel at all levels, instructors and teachers, specialists in a variety of disciplines as well as a crop of indigenous entrepreneurs would all be needed to have the necessary breakthrough measures formulated and implemented. The crucial element in all these would be that of managing the African economies effectively with the human factor playing the leading role.

18. Equally if not more important, is that such investments in human resources development ought to be allocated and managed within the prospects of Africa's development challenges and changing priorities as conceived in the LPA and elaborated upon in APPER and UN-PAAERD and those for ensuring their productive utilization. More so, investments in human resources for development would need to focus on new challenges and strategies that would have resulted from the implementation of Africa's recovery programmes between now and 1990. All things being equal, these challenges would be those transcending beyond recovery and foundation building into challenges for transforming and sustaining African economic and social structures for self-sustaining development.

19. Accordingly, issues such as "effective organization" and "development management" would be among the key variables to be harnessed in meeting the above challenges. E/ Foundational to the issue of effective organization is the evolution of development oriented leadership, a process of development oriented administration and a development conscious society. Additionally, there would be a need for new development concepts, approaches and organizational behaviour as well as greater cooperation between institutions and individuals. On the other hand, Africa's ability to manage effectively available resources will have to be enhanced. This would depend largely upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those who formulate and appraise policies, those who approve and enact the policies, and those who execute the elements of such policies. In practical terms, these must be men and women having the necessary "know-how" and "know-why" that would ensure and exploit the appropriate relationship between development objectives, available resources and development activities so as to effectively manage growth and the distribution of that growth. This means that national human resources management process in Africa will have to take on a new and more purposeful dimension not only in terms of planning for the development and utilization of human resources, but also of ensuring their effective utilization for national development. In this connexion, an emerging consensus is that such a process should evolve from within, and rely upon an integrated organ

2/ For further elaboration of these issues, see
E/ECA/AAU/ED/76/2; Policies and Strategies for Institutions of
Higher Learning in Africa in View of Africa's Long-term
Development Challenges and Strategies, ECA, 1986.

comprehensive in nature, approach and scope having capabilities to:

- (a) initiate, formulate and administer manpower policies within the framework of national development policies;
- (b) identify, analyse and specify manpower development and utilization problems, objectives and alternative programmes and strategies;
- (c) coordinate, monitor and evaluate the execution of adopted measures to ensure optimum results and consistency;
- (d) prepare national and sectoral manpower development and utilization plans that would synchronize labour supply and demand targets in conformity with overall national development objectives.

20. Two major conditions would need to be satisfied if the process is to be put into the desirable shape and motion. First, a comprehensive and integrated human resources planning and programming machinery will have to be conceived, designed and developed. Secondly, adequate attention will have to be given to the machinery to ensure its functional scope, operational effectiveness and resource capacities in terms of staffing, authority within the power structure and the machinery's interrelationship with other sectoral machineries. Decisions made at the 1981 and 1984 meetings of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization are clear indications that the need to satisfy these two pre-conditions is recognized by African Governments, many of whom have taken steps towards their implementation though the pace, with regards to functionalizing the process, and reinforcing the required institutional capabilities, is not as fast as was anticipated by the Conference during those meetings. It may be recalled that during its first meeting, the Conference called upon African governments to, among other things, accord high priority to planning the development and utilization of human resources and to ensure that the process be an integral part of overall national economic and social development planning. Also Member States were called upon to set up machinery and institutional arrangements for coordinating human resources and employment planning, within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, and to adopt comprehensive national training policies that would adequately provide the means and mechanism for manpower training in both public and private sectors on a sustained basis. _0/

21. The recognition of this need is further exemplified by the priority given to human resources development and utilization in

APPER and Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis which gave birth to UN-PAAPED. 1_0/ For an example, APPER asserts that "the attainment of the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) depends, in the final analysis, on the development of a wide range of human resources required for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programmes covering the entire spectrum and sectoral activities in the economic development process". 1_1/ Accordingly, the Governments of Africa submitted as one of four priority areas to be given full attention, the development of human resources. 1_2/ What remains is to translate this recognition into sustained action over and beyond the recovery period for African governments to succeed in revitalizing the food and agriculture sector, combatting drought and controlling desertification as desired in the action programmes for African self-reliant and self-sustained development.

III General Nature of Human Resources Planning and Programming in Africa

22. Efforts have been made by many African Governments since the 1980s to lay the framework for human resources planning and programming in Africa. Review of African governments annual reports, national and regional development plans, executive pronouncements, etc. would, in one way or the other, show a rising consensus on "man" as being the object and subject of development. A deeper analysis would also show that mention is frequently made of the need to integrate human resources planning into development planning as a strategy for ensuring economic growth and distribution. Equally, though not entirely encouraging, is the growing attention most of these plans and reports are given to the development of health, education, vocational training and agriculture, all of which have great significance for the development and utilization of human resources. While this observation do suggest a positive trend in human resources planning and programming in Africa, the process of manpower and employment planning continues to be saddled with bottlenecks which must be removed if the human factor is to play an effective role in Africa's economic recovery and long-term development. These bottlenecks which reflect the nature of the process, are manifested by a weak data base and a poor policy planning and management process.

(a) Data Collection, Processing and Analysis

1_0/See OAU; "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990"; ECA, Addis, 1985; "Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis"; Addis, 1986; and the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990"; General Assembly, A/RES/S-17/2, June 1986.

1_1/APPER, op. cit., p.3

1_2/Africa's Submission; op. cit.

23. The need to collect, process and analyse human resources data has always been felt, but somehow nothing substantial seems to be happening in meeting this need appreciably. Evidence continues to show weaknesses in the process not only for data gathering, but also for identifying the types of data needed, the most effective way of producing them and the means to ensuring their widest possible use.

24. These weaknesses have resulted in a number of major gaps and deficiencies in existing manpower data and information leading to a poor state of manpower and employment planning. On account of these gaps, the process suffers from (i) the slow pace in the production of statistics which often makes most data obsolete when published; (ii) an undesirable level of data accuracy and reliability; (iii) incompleteness of coverage; (iv) the lack of comparability of time series data; and (v) the lack of involvement on the part of users and producers of manpower information. Furthermore, what has been even more frustrating is that efforts made by many governments to improve the situation have been retarded by many other structural factors whose existence need not be. These include (i) the existence of poor functional linkages between the institutions for and processes of data collection, data processing, data analysis and data utilization; (ii) inadequate or piecemeal specification of the type and form of data to be collected on the part of planners, policy makers and policy implementors; and (iii) placement of more emphasis on the use of an ad-hoc data collection system as opposed to the use of a continuous and comparative data collection system.

25. Conceptual difficulties such as finding operational definition for basic labour force and labour market concepts within the African context have equally influenced the nature of human resources planning and programming in Africa. Not enough work has as yet been done in Africa to elucidate these concepts in respect of the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions within the region. Definitions of concepts such as employment, unemployment, underemployment and labour force are even more problematic. In the few cases where they have been explicitly stated, they emphasize wage remuneration, at times, time and rarely intensity of work and productivity. In most cases, these definitions make it difficult to be precise about employment conditions outside the formal sector of African dual economies.

26. Because of the problems of concept and definition, another difficulty arises in identifying and measuring the magnitude of employment, unemployment and underemployment which implies that an instrument has to be devised which will more precisely identify people who fall into the various employment categories. For example, speaking of labour markets and the collection of labour market information in the traditional sense would affect only a minority of the African working population directly. Consequently, Richter has advised that it may not be quite meaningful to "talk of say employment market information within the African context which in its sense may be taken to mean all

quantitative and qualitative information on the major characteristics of the working population, levels of employment, unemployment and underemployment, labour supply-and-demand positions; and imbalances in levels of earnings in different economic sectors, occupations and regions". 1_3/ In other words, African governments have as yet to come up with realistic concepts, definitions, and measurement instruments which will enable them to plan for productive employment and the effective utilization of the labour force. Needless to say, the failure to do so could present a central constraint on employment planning as the situation could pose a problem of understanding how these labour conditions exist side by side with each other in African economies.

27. In addition to the structural factors and conceptual difficulties which characterize the human resources planning process in Africa, the application of the survey method for data collection leaves much to be desired. For the most part, a "manpower survey" in Africa has meant "stock taking" of available and needed skills within the formal sector of the economy. These surveys have more often than not failed to take into account the broader role labour plays simultaneously in the growth and management of the entire economy which embraces the informal sector and the rural subsistence sector as well. Besides, little attention is paid to the selection of the form, type and frequency of the data collection method. Survey "subject-matters" are often ill-defined and when they are, they are limited in scope for establishing existing "cause-effect" relationships between the various aspects of human resources management and national development. Secondly, most surveys in Africa are conducted without, perhaps due to resource constraints, undertaking an adequate "survey pre-planning" review exercise. Such a review could have dealt with the identification of preliminary indicators in relation to short and long-term objectives of the desired survey with the view to establishing possible linkages and areas of collaboration. Also such a review could have diagnosed operational and administrative problems encountered during past surveys and accordingly devise possible contingency strategy to avoid their re-occurrence. Associated with this is the weakness in the critical link which ought to exist between data collection, analysis and policy formulation. The region, on the whole, has limitation for converting processed and unprocessed data into policy proposals and strategies. The shortage of, and in some cases, the absence of manpower and employment planners and analysts has been cited as being a root cause of this limitation.

28. Finally, most manpower surveys are not fully executed. To be complete, three interconnecting activities will have to be undertaken: conducting the field work; processing the data; and publication of the results. In this connexion, two observations

1_3/Richter, L.E.; "Upgrading Employment-Market Reporting: Realities and Priorities in Africa"; printed in The Challenge of Employment and Basic Needs in Africa, ILO, Chapter II, p. 123, Oxford, Nairobi, 1986.

seem important. First, survey execution activities ought to be closely linked to planned activities, resources and schedules. Secondly, the same degree of enthusiasm, if not more, that was given to the pre-execution phase should be devoted to all of the three interconnecting survey execution activities.

27. Experiences in Africa have, however, shown that most manpower survey exercises have fallen short on these two important considerations. The results, of course, are manifested in wasted resources, and loss of faith in the data gathering and planning processes. In some cases, failure to understand the nature and interrelationships of the various components in survey execution has created this undesirable situation. The principal lesson which is often missed is that manpower survey is never complete until the results are usable for policy and programming purposes. Many a times, the "fun-fare" of a manpower survey is extinguished when interviewers have returned from the field and exhausted their exchanges of experiences in the various enumeration areas. At times, other pressing administrative duties and government objectives have prevented survey officials from conducting a planned survey or from completing it after the fieldwork.

30. In order to redress these and other problems it would require the development of requisite institutional and staffing capabilities that would ensure a systematic and scientific data gathering, data processing and data utilization system. Among other things, the system should evolve the ability to prepare and conduct manpower surveys in response to specific needs and objectives within an integrated planning framework. Needless to say that the development of such an ability is in its infancy in most African countries. This suggests the urgent need for training in the techniques and procedures for the preparation and conduct of manpower surveys.

(b) Policy Formulation and Administration

31. African governments have realized that the existence of a comprehensive national manpower policy provides a vital component in the process of socio-economic development and planning. This recognition is fully reflected in the Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) as well as in UN-PAAERD. It is equally reflected in national development plans and various official pronouncements on the vital role to be played by the human factor in national recovery and self-sustained development. Broadly speaking, all governments are consciously committed in one form or another towards adopting policies or policy packages aimed at ensuring the efficient development and utilization of Africa's vast human resources potential for production, productivity and growth. Despite the recognition and conscious efforts made, more is still to be desired with respect to the formulation and administration of national manpower development and utilization policies within the context and framework of overall economic development policies and strategies. For the most part, African nations have, as yet, to develop and operationalize

systematic processes through which meaningful human resources policies are to be determined and harmonized with other developmental policies. To begin with, the "art" of manpower "policy planning" in the region is in its infancy, and unfortunately, very little investment is being made to develop the state of the art. Because of this poor planning for manpower policy formulation and administration in Africa, the process suffers from three limitations.

32. First, manpower planning policies in Africa are generally not forceful on issues of efficiency and equity of development. For example, national action and attitudes on employment and labour-market policies tend not to improve the balance between the growth of labour supply and the growth of labour demand; nor do they tend to ensure an increase in real personal earnings, a wider distribution of those earnings, and a steady increase in labour productivity and mobility particularly, in the rural and urban informal sectors of African economies. Secondly, poor manpower policy planning has led to a situation where enunciated policies are unclear about manpower planning and programming objectives, expected outputs and institutional responsibilities. For example, other than broad, and at times, inconsistent statements on the need for generating employment or for developing the nation's human resources, most African countries do not have clear policy statements or packages that would (i) provide guidance for effective planning, development and utilization of human resources; (ii) minimize duplication of national efforts and wastage of scarce resources; and (iii) provide a basis on which different national human resources development and utilization programmes such as those dealing with health, nutrition, social welfare are integrated, co-ordinated, monitored, evaluated and adjusted for maximum results. Thirdly, manpower policy planning in the region is often limited in scope. Very little thoughts have been given to policies that could deal with other related problems resulting from rapid urbanization and a declining economic environment. As such, the planning process lacks the capacity to deal with the issues of urban unemployment, wages, investments, educational facilities, and the size and living conditions of the labour force.

33. In addition to the poor state of manpower policy planning, African Governments have as yet to take practical steps and adopt appropriate strategies and techniques within an integrated process that would ensure systematic manpower policy formulation and policy administration. Consequently, much of the attempts made at manpower policy determination have made little impact towards ensuring the acceptability and full implementation of formulated policies. More often than not, steps to have the policies approved at the highest possible level of authority are inadequate and mainly ad-hoc in nature. In some cases, the policies themselves are not adopted as integral parts of overall national development policies. More critical is that when and if they are approved and/or adopted, formulated policies are neither disseminated widely nor interpreted to implementors and

beneficiaries. Furthermore, with the exception of those concerned with labour-management relationships, most of the manpower policies formulated do lack the legal, operational and institutional basis which would have ensured their effective implementation, evaluation and if necessary, reformulation.

34. The combined effects of poor manpower policy planning, and the disintegrated and unsystematic approach to policy formulation and administration have not only constrained manpower development and utilization planning in Africa; but have also made mockery of socio-economic development planning in many African countries. In other words, the general nature of manpower policy formulation and administration in Africa leaves much to be desired. By their very nature, human resources policies have been limited in their effectiveness to adequately redress three interrelated human resources management shortcomings that have been clearly identified over the years.

35. First, it has resulted in unclear policy statements and measures on the need for making manpower planning more realistic in terms of its ability to provide those who make decisions on human resources development and utilization with accurate and reliable figures on what occupational categories, and in what numbers and at what skill levels, will be required at a particular time. Secondly, very little has been done by way of introducing and adhering to policy guidelines that would shift the emphasis of manpower planning activities from forecasting/projection work to analysis and reformulation of policies within the context of African realities and changing priorities. Thirdly, the poor state of affairs have led to the failure of national human resources development policies to find out how best to make the products of education and training systems more suitable and responsive to African urban and rural labour-market conditions and requirements.

36. The impact of the continued presence of these deficiencies and imbalances on the future development trend of Africa in relation to the other world regions cannot be overemphasized. Needless to say that Africa's recovery and development hinge on the adoption and implementation of policy measures, particularly at national levels, that would appropriately enhance the regions ability to adjust and gear its economies in response to fluctuating domestic and world economic conditions, and to changes in climatic conditions as well as to changes in the structure and composition of demand. Anything short of developing such a capability could increase the probability of the future re-occurrence of the socio-economic crisis that engulfed Africa in recent years.

37. Two lessons could be drawn from the above assessment which would no doubt have far reaching consequences for the strengthening of human resources policy formulation and administration process in Africa. First, governments should ensure that manpower policy packages embody an outline of goals and

objectives. Such packages should be aimed at the achievement of political, social and economic goals of the nation. In other words, to be meaningful, the formulation and administration of manpower policy, should be an outgrowth of careful analysis of development problems, issues, constraints, and strategies as they relate to the acceptance and implementation of anticipated human resources development and utilization policies.

38. Secondly, national manpower policies should be re-enforced by clear statements on the steps, strategies and techniques for initiating and implementing activities relating to manpower planning and programming; education and training; and employment and labour productivity. Such statements should seek to provide direct answers to a number of issues. For example, in the area of manpower planning and programming, issues such as determining possible operational constraints, establishing objectives and goals of the intended policy as well as the institutional, legal and operational framework for implementing the policies, would need to be considered. Those relating to education and training, would on the other hand focus on human capital investment issues so as to ensure that the present and future work force attains appropriate levels and diversities of knowledge, skills and attitudes within the context of national development needs. Finally, policies aimed at the efficient use of human resources would have to stem from the need to manage employment opportunities, and increase labour efficiency.

39. It should however be noted that these three policy areas are interrelated and consequential of each other. The successful accomplishment of a set of policy objectives in one of these areas, depends to a large extent on what happens in the other two areas. Consequently, member States will have to continue their search for a systematic approach that would ensure the harmonization and integration of manpower development and utilization policies within the overall framework of national development objectives and policies.

IV Status of Manpower and Employment Planning Institutions and Activities: A Selected Survey

40. The dilemma posed by an expanding labour force, on the one hand, and a declining absorptive capacity of the labour market, on the other, has become one of the burning manpower and employment planning issues in Africa. The dilemma is compounded by the inadequacy of labour market information and the complexities of defining and understanding employment and unemployment, skill-technology-mix, productivity and income issues and trends. It is further complicated by weak institutional linkages and in some cases, weak structures regarding manpower training and deployment, and the difficulties in conducting, processing, analysing and disseminating survey results. A status review shows that during the last four years, efforts were intensified by many African governments, and many attempts made at establishing appropriate policy and strategy guidelines for dealing with the

dilemma. The move is indeed a crucial step towards the development of a process for human resources development and utilization planning in Africa. Specifically, attempts have been made with modest gains on two fronts: First, institutional capabilities are being strengthened by a number of countries. Secondly, a series of manpower and employment planning activities are being initiated or have already taken place. To appreciate the status of manpower and employment planning in Africa, is to review the level and effectiveness of performance with respect to these two critical steps which are essential for ensuring an operational human resources management system in the region.

(a) Institutional Arrangements for Human Resources Planning

41. The Conference of Ministers responsible for human resources planning, development and utilization strongly urged the establishment and/or strengthening of national institutional machineries with capabilities for the effective management of human resources as part of the strategy for accelerating socio-economic development in Africa. As indicated earlier, attempts at responding to this call are being made though on a modest scale. In principle, nearly all African governments have accepted the need for strong and operative institutions to deal with human resources planning. In fact many of them have embarked upon concrete steps to build such institutions, not only at the advisory level but also at the levels for inter-sectoral co-ordination and sector studies.

42. Advisory or consultative bodies have been established by a number of governments to formulate, guide, co-ordinate, evaluate and advise on human resources policies and programmes within a planning framework. A National Manpower Board, and a Manpower and Employment Advisory Committee are established with statutory responsibilities in Nigeria and Ethiopia respectively. A National Employment, Manpower and Income Council has been established in Botswana. The Council is supported by other advisory bodies including the Manpower Subcommittee, the Income Subcommittee, the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, the Salary Review Commission, the Wage Policy Committee and the National Training and Technical Education Committee. Besides the National Manpower Development Committee, the Kenyan Government has also established specific sectoral consultative bodies for manpower development. These include the National Industrial Council which is to advise the Labour Minister on matters related to industrial training; the Kenya Education Commission, and the National Committee on Education Objectives and Policies. Similarly, the Egyptian Government has created the Supreme Council for Manpower Planning and Training to formulate, guide, co-ordinate and advise on human resources matters.

43. The day-to-day primary manpower and employment planning functions are, for the most part, dispersed among the ministries or agencies responsible for economic planning and development; public service management; labour and social affairs; education

and training in most African countries. Only few governments have established full ministries to deal with human resources management issues as called for by the first meeting of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization. Those few countries include Egypt which has the Ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training; Tanzania which had long before the Conference decision consolidated manpower and employment planning functions within the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development; and Zimbabwe where the functions are consolidated within the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development.

44. Nonetheless, a number of countries have initiated action to better streamline and co-ordinate manpower and employment planning functions in their respective countries. For example, the Governments of Botswana, Guinea, Lesotho, Togo, Benin and Kenya have restructured their high level manpower advisory bodies with the view to ensuring better co-ordination and to bringing into focus the relationship between human resources planning and the achievement of national development objectives. Some of the efforts have been specific in nature. Ethiopia, for instance, restructured activities of the former Public Administration Institute, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Management, and the National Industrial Vocational Training Scheme, with the net result being the establishment of the Ethiopian Management Institute made directly responsible to the Council of Ministers with a broad mandate for management training activities throughout the industrial and various Government sectors.

45. What seems encouraging is that most of these institutional reforms are geared more so towards ensuring the integration of human resources planning into national development planning and better co-ordination of manpower and employment planning activities. On the whole, attention is being focused on meeting institutional requirements for formulating and administering manpower development and utilization policies and programmes in the light of identified human resources problems. Accordingly, sectoral manpower planning organs are beginning to take roots in most of these countries to lend support to primary manpower and employment planning organs. A laudable and recommendable example of this development is the establishment of the Department of Health Manpower Development and Utilization in the Ministry of Health in Botswana. The Department has four broad responsibilities: the setting of health manpower development policy and priorities; health manpower planning; health manpower development; and the deployment and utilization of health manpower. 46. What is unfortunate is that most of these sector manpower planning organs are more often than not established on a case-by-case basis depending on the level of influence and orientation of a particular ministry as opposed to the use of a systematic and consistent approach in creating within every ministry and enterprise such capabilities. Secondly, except for large public and private enterprises, sector organs are of the traditional type comprising mainly planning bureaux in education ministries

which deals primarily with curriculum planning, education planning, school facility planning and education data collection; and personnel departments or units within various ministries, agencies and enterprises. Steps will therefore have to be taken to reverse the trend of these two practices to ensure a better development management process.

47. Additionally more and more member States have requested for technical assistance towards the building of the required institutional capabilities for manpower and employment planning. Those sought from the ECA in the last four years have taken the form of consultations and national training workshops. The Governments of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia and Uganda have benefited directly from such support with a view to establishing an effective manpower and employment planning process. Experiences from these consultations and workshops indicate that assistance of this kind is of vital importance to member States in that they serve as complements to national efforts for implementing the decisions of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization.

(b) Manpower and Employment Planning Activities

48. As inferred earlier, the nature and scope of manpower and employment planning activities undertaken would also affect the status of the process, since activities are the lubricants for making our process functional or not. Therefore, a review of activities in a few selected member States was carried out to describe the status of the process. It should be noted that the coverage of activities in these selected countries is not as complete as could be, since the intention here is to only illustrate the trend of events that have taken place in the region during the last few years.

49. Generally, the review shows that the majority of member States have undertaken a series of activities related to the planning function within a human resources management system and have initiated concrete programmes and strategies to affect some of those activities. Unfortunately, resource and other technical constraints have unavoidably depressed the level of effectiveness in these endeavours. Foremost among these constraints are the unclear nature of human resources policies; low commitment towards manpower planning and programming; the inadequacy and/or non-availability of processed data and information required for manpower and employment planning; and the shortage and/or misallocation of trained and experienced manpower and employment planners and statisticians.

50. To better illustrate the efforts being made by African governments and the need for greater efforts we shall highlight some of the activities undertaken in a few countries. Most of these activities took the form of policy revision and reforms, national workshops/conferences/seminars, surveys and studies.

(i) Policy revision and reforms

51. A number of African governments have initiated a series of reform measures in policies related to human resources planning, development and utilization during the last five years. The Tanzania Government reviewed and revised the longstanding "bonding" policy, which demanded that all potential students to the nation's institutions of higher learning should serve at least two years in Government service before joining the institution. Plans are also underway to review the Government's 1964 policy on human resources, and to institute policy measures that would strengthen the flow of information for better human resources planning in Tanzania. The Government of Zaire, through legislation No. 34-033, instituted an annual levy payroll deduction policy in 1974 which would increase funds to the National Institute of vocational training. A recent move by the Zairian Government was the inclusion within the 1986-1990 Development Plan objectives and strategies for the reorganization of public management, and the creation of new jobs through community projects.

52. Policy measures were also taken by the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire (1937), Djibouti (1965), and Tunisia (1925) all aimed at rationalizing the civil service and making it more productive and cost-effective. One of such measures taken in Cote d'Ivoire was the increase in the retirement age from 55 to 60 for those employed in higher education, scientific research and medicines. The rationale was that the training cost of such personnel to society is great, and given their scarcity, it would only be prudent to use their skills and knowledge for as long as possible. Another important measure initiated is that all civil servants holding teaching or engineering degrees would now be required to exercise their professions in the field rather than occupying administrative office post. New legislation on the status and union rights of the civil servants was introduced in Djibouti. These new conditions govern specifically recruitment, dismissal, salary and wages, retirement and conditions of service. In Tunisia, the Government consolidated the Legislative Act providing new dimensions with respect to retirement age, the granting of bonuses and the amount of annual pensions.

53. Another related area where Member States have made policy reforms is in the granting of incentives, benefits and job security for the labour force. For example, direct policy measures were taken by the Governments of Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Mauritius, the Central African Republic and Zimbabwe to improve the wellbeing of their respective work force. With the passage of Act 33-002, the Government of Benin established legislation controls on recruitment and dismissals and entrusted the monitoring responsibility to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The policy under this law requires that all companies declare full details of their manpower turnover and utilization on an annual basis. Regarding recruitment procedures, all employers must notify the regional placement office within their

occupational sector of all job vacancies and the required qualifications. Equally, no dismissals may be made without advanced notice given to or authorization received from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Additionally, a providence fund, financed by members' contributions, a subsidy and interest on investments, has been established to facilitate resettlement of national emigrant workers from abroad when they finally return to Benin.

54. In 1984, the Government of Cameroon and the Central African Republic revised their Pension Acts and the Cameroon Government amended its life insurance scheme. Improvements made concerned voluntary affiliation, early retirement privileges, invalidity, old-age and the protection of survivors after death. Several changes were made in 1983 by the Government of Cameroon in respect of regulations governing staff redundancies. Similarly, changes in workers' benefit rates, contributions and the management system were introduced by the Guinea Government through ordinance 265/PPG in 1984. These were basically aimed at streamlining the social security scheme. An unemployment hardship relief scheme, covering heads of family who are registered as unemployed and are actively looking for work, was introduced in Mauritius by act of legislation as an initial step towards the creation of an unemployment insurance scheme. On its part, the Government of Zimbabwe laid down minimum wage rates for all categories of occupation and has put into motion measures to harmonize wages.

55. As can be seen, most of these reforms were geared towards improving labour-management relations. Similar efforts will have to be made in respect of human resources development policies and human resources planning and programming policies to complete the picture. In addition and as stated earlier, efforts will have to be intensified and resources allocated for strengthening the process of policy formulation, policy management and policy implementation if Africa's recovery and self-sustained development are to be accelerated efficiently.

(ii) National Workshops/Seminars/Conferences

56. In 1984 two national manpower workshops were held by the Tanzanian Government. One was on the appraisal of manpower policies and planning which was mounted in September for manpower officials in Government Ministries and regions. The other was held in December on manpower policies and planning, information systems and manpower utilization for Heads of Manpower Development and Administration in Government Ministries and regions. In the same year, a national policy conference on education and training was held in Liberia aimed at reviewing and streamlining human resources development policies and strategies. In the following year, the Liberian Government, in collaboration with the ECA, organized a national manpower and employment planning staff development workshop. The primary objective was to strengthen staffing and institutional capabilities for the production and analysis of human resources data and the formulation and administration of manpower policies and strategies.

57. National workshops with objectives similar to those of the Liberian Workshop were organized in Botswana and Uganda in 1987 with assistance from the ECA. A training workshop on public service manpower planning and allocation was organized by the Government of Botswana in March. Prior to this, and as a follow-up to the 1981 national manpower planning workshop, the Government mounted a national manpower planning seminar in 1983 which concentrated on institutional arrangements, localization of the workforce, employment generation possibilities and constraints, and education and training. On its part, the Ugandan Government organized a national manpower and employment planning staff development workshop in May 1987. Like the Liberian Workshop, the objective here was to strengthen staffing and institutional capabilities for human resources management. In Nigeria, a national workshop on manpower development and utilization was held in 1985 aimed at strengthening staffing capabilities of those managing the public service. Two seminars, one on employment in a depressed economy with particular reference to graduate employment and the other on manpower potentialities, were also organized by the Nigerian Government.

58. A tripartite symposium on employment was organized in Mali in 1984 with participants drawn from Government, employers and employees. A number of recommendations emerged from the symposium and a number of practical measures adopted to improve employment planning and management in the country. These measures touched on policies for strengthening the data and information base and employment management institutions. A year earlier, the Tunisian Association of Occupational Safety and Improved Working Conditions had organized a seminar, the objective of which was to examine the possibility for including courses on occupational safety and health conditions into the education and training curricula. The impact of the seminar led to the establishment of a permanent pedagogical advisory panel to advise on the programme, as well as to the introduction of a

course on occupational safety for fifth-year students in the University science faculties.

59. Apparently, the momentum for organizing workshops and seminars on a strategy for developing rational capabilities to plan and manage human resources for development is on the rise. One area of concern however, lies in the extent to which Member States and the international organization have been able to institute and execute follow-up measures to these activities. Perhaps as a more useful approach, successive workshops and seminars should be interconnected within the framework of a well laid down follow-up plan. From a small sample of the various reports emerging from these exercises, very little has been done to follow this approach.

(iii) Surveys and studies

60. The 1980 employment survey in Ethiopia, conducted for mini-stries and public and private enterprises employing at least 50 persons, was followed by a comprehensive employment survey in 1982. This was in support of the Government's growing interest in gathering reliable manpower and employment data and information. In addition, basic research on several human activity and the assessment of the urban informal and rural agricultural sectors were undertaken during the last year. Since 1982, the Nigerian Government had conducted a labour force sample survey; a shuttle employment enquiry study; a manpower and training needs survey in selected industries and a graduate employment tracer study. In Liberia, an establishment survey was conducted in 1982 followed by a manpower survey in 1985 with both aimed at assessing the manpower demand and supply situation in the economy. Tanzania conducted a major national manpower survey in 1986 covering nearly 1,200 establishments from the public parastatals and private sectors. Since 1982, three establishment surveys related to manpower had been conducted by the Government of Uganda: Survey of Manpower and training in the Ministry of Lands, Minerals and Water Resources (1982); Census of Civil Service (1984) and Survey of Transport Manpower and Training (1985).

61. The Botswana Government has institutionalized the employment survey as an annual activity over the years. This is supplemented by an annual labour force survey with the first comprehensive labour force survey taking place between May 1984 and April 1985. The other relevant institutionalized annual survey is the education survey which is conducted jointly by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education. Two major human resources studies were undertaken by the Botswana Government in 1987. One was on manpower requirement and the Botswana polytechnic and the brigades, while the other concentrated on training needs for the mines. Other important studies undertaken included studies on management and productivity, and employment and labour use in Botswana.

62. The processing and publication of the results of these various studies and surveys have been constrained greatly by two main factors. Nearly all Member States are limited in their ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Compounding this is a rapid turnover of the few trained and experienced analysts, programmers and data processors. Together, these two have led to an acute shortage of data managers who are needed to facilitate the preparation of respectable publication on manpower and employment related issues. Secondly, the exercise is constrained by poor data processing technology. Computerized data processing in many African countries, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, is still in its infancy. Where attempts have been made to set up the system, these have been faced with the shortage of system analysts, programmers and maintenance personnel. These constraints notwithstanding, many countries have made modest gains

to have the data collected published, though often published late and with smaller degrees of statistical confidence.

V Observations on the Effectiveness of the Process and its Long-term Prospects for Stimulating Economic Recovery and Development in Africa

63. What emerges from the analysis with regards to the nature, status and scope of human resources planning and programming in Africa is an encouraging picture. First, the need to establish appropriate institutional arrangements to administer the process for ensuring national development seems to have been felt by African governments. This urge is derived from poor development results which have been obtained in the last few years partly because of the general tendency for governments to pay little or no attention to the manpower implications for the implementation of national development plans. Secondly, an institutional and operational framework for an overall human resources management system has begun to evolve in many African States. This is manifested in the many efforts that are being made to establish national policy organs and a number of supportive inter-sectoral and sectoral human resources management organs.

64. At the moment, the impact of these efforts is dampened by a number of impediments which, to an extent, differ in form and character from one country to the next. However, there are certain common weaknesses whose presence has constrained the effectiveness of the process, and which will have to be overcome to ensure the adequate functioning of the process. To begin with, activities of the "organic parts" will have to be systematically designed and integrated with those carried out by primary manpower and employment planning organs in relation to those carried out by the advisory/consultative organs. More often than not, sectoral organs, which should have been complementary in nature, do adopt inward-looking approaches in their activities with little or no reference made to the activities of national primary organs responsible for manpower and employment policy formulation and planning. The process also suffers generally from technical inadequacies in regards to the application of the state of the art of manpower and employment planning, and from the absence of a conclusive conceptual framework for human resources management within the context of Africa development profile, needs and objectives. In addition to the shortage of funds and well trained and experienced manpower and employment planners and data collectors, the process is also constrained by the lack of effective linkages and co-ordination in the activities of the various organs responsible directly or indirectly for the planning and programming of manpower and its utilization.

65. Three major steps will therefore have to be taken in order to reverse the above situation. First, national and regional efforts made so far towards the establishment of the required institutional arrangements will have to be sustained and intensified during and beyond the recovery period. Secondly,

specific policies with respect to manpower and employment planning and programming, as well as to the strengthening of institutional interrelationships and linkages within the aggregate development planning system will have to be clearly stated and vigorously pursued. Thirdly, steps will have to be taken to ensure adequate managerial professional and operational capabilities within the created institutions with emphasis placed on the specification of clear and measurable work programme together with unit terms of references; the initiation of staff development and utilization policies and programmes; and the administration and periodic evaluation of policies and programmes.

66. In addition to these institutional reforms, the scope and relevancy of manpower and employment planning and programming activities will have to be broadened and consolidated. Systematic planning for the mobilization, development and utilization of requisite African manpower would have to take on greater significance particularly if national development objectives are to be met. This means that the thrust of such efforts will have to be geared towards the long-term creation of institutional machinery with staffing and operational capabilities to produce the

following: - Reliable and up-to-date periodic education, manpower, labour force and labour market statistics and information:

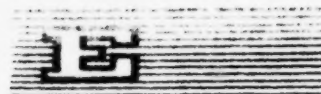
- Plans, policies and strategies for matching skills and jobs, creating employment opportunities, increasing labour productivity and developing requisite human skills, knowledge and attitudes; and
- Technical services towards the implementation of human resources development and utilization programmes and policies.

67. In short, for the process to exert the necessary influence on Africa's economic recovery and development, structures and interrelationships of institutions would need to be strengthened where they exist, and created where they don't. The prospects for doing so seem encouraging particularly given the provisions and commitments of APPER and UN-PAAPED as they relate to the mobilization and management of human resources for the long-term economic and social transformation of Africa.



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NATURE, STATUS AND SCOPE OF MANPOWER
AND EMPLOYMENT PLANNING PROCESSES IN AFRICA

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

LC/NAIROBI

The Nature, Status and Scope of Manpower and Employment Planning Processes in Africa

Executive Summary

I. Introduction

1. Several analysis of economic development trends in Africa during the last decade show that the performance of African economies, by and large, had been sluggish. Among the major contributing factors to this state of sluggishness are: (i) the inadequacy and poor condition of Africa's transport and communication infrastructure; (ii) Africa's incapability to adequately exploit, process and utilize, in an integrated manner, her vast reserves of natural resources, and (iii) a diminishing trend in capital growth with a growing financial leakage both of which give rise to huge payment deficits and the accumulation of foreign debt. A careful analysis of these contributing factors raises doubts on the appropriateness of the region's policies, strategies, programmes and attitudes toward the development and utilization of its vast human resources potentials for development.

2. This notwithstanding, a number of African Governments have instituted actions, ranging from the creation of ministries, departments or units for dealing with human resources management, to the conduct of reviews and studies on the status of human resources in their respective countries, and the formulation of regional strategies in their search of optimum ways of ensuring an efficient human resources development and utilization process so as to realize their desire for economic recovery and development. This report reviews the nature and status of these efforts particularly, as they relate to human resources planning activities and programmes in Africa at the macro-level and highlights their scope for future action with the view to assisting member States in their efforts to place the human factor in its rightful cell within their respective economic and social recovery and self-sustained development strategy.

II. Major Observations for Consideration

3. It should be noted at the outset that though commendable, most of the efforts made toward improving the process of manpower and employment planning in Africa fall short of the required orientation, framework and support that could ensure a more permanent solution to the ill-management of Africa's resource flows and utilization.

4. Three other major observations on the process which has greater relevance for Africa's recovery and long-term development need to be single out. First, there is a growing need for a comprehensive human resources planning sub-system. But to be effective, the system should be placed within the context and framework of the Lagos Plan of Action, (LPA), Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, (APPER), and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD). These action programmes addressed themselves principally to achieving a breakthrough in structural transformation with emphasis placed on food and agriculture, industry, human resources, science and technology, transport and communications, trade and finance.

Needless to say, the achievement of this breakthrough would, to a larger extent, require adequate investments in human resources development at all levels. Such investments should be allocated and managed within the prospects of present development challenges and shifting priorities as conceived in the LPA and elaborated upon in APPEP and UN-PAAERD. In addition, they would need to be focused on new challenges and strategies that would have resulted from the implementation of Africa's recovery programmes between now and 1990. It is by so doing, that one can ensure an integrated process and machinery, both comprehensive in nature, approach and scope with the sole objective of fostering Africa's long-term economic and social development.

5. Second, problems associated with data collection, processing and analysis and those associated with policy formulation and administration have seriously constrained the achievements of the many efforts made by member States' Governments to strengthen human resources management institutions in the last five years. For example, difficulties exist in identifying the type of required data; conceptualizing and finding operational definition for basic labour force and labour market concepts such as employment, unemployment, underemployment, productivity, work, etc.; and conceiving, planning, designing, conducting and processing manpower surveys. On the other hand, the region as a whole, suffers from a state of poor management and poor policy planning due primarily to the disintegrated and unsystematic approach used for policy formulation and administration. The result of this has not only constrained manpower development and utilization planning and programming processes in Africa, but has also made mockery of socio-economic development planning in many African countries.

6. With regards to the former, the process suffers specifically from three limitations as a result of this poor state of policy planning and management: (i) policies in Africa are generally not forceful on issues of efficiency and equity of development and thereby limits the development potentials of the process; (ii) the process suffers from a situation where enunciated policies are unclear about manpower planning and programming objectives, expected outputs and institutional responsibilities; (iii) the process suffers from the lack of adequate capacity to deal with the issues of urban unemployment, wages, investments, educational facilities, and the size and living conditions of the labour force primarily because manpower policy planning in the region is often limited in scope with little thoughts given to policies and problems relating to these human dimension issues.

7. The third and final observation relates to the structure and effectiveness of national institutional arrangements for human resources planning, and the type and nature of human resources planning activities undertaken in the region. The review shows that for the most part, member States have made modest gains towards evolving an institutional framework for strengthening their respective capabilities for human resources planning. In addition, member States have undertaken a number of associated activities in the form of policy revision and reforms, training workshops/seminars/conferences, studies and surveys.

8. These gains and efforts could have made greater marks, but for a number of impediments, some of which are common to many African countries. For example, the process often lacks effective linkages and co-ordination in the

activities of the various organs responsible directly or indirectly for the planning and programming of manpower and its utilization. More often than not, sectoral organs, which should have been complementary in nature, do adopt inward looking approaches in their activities with little or no reference made to the activities of national primary organs responsible for manpower and employment policy formulation and planning. Technical inadequacies relating to the application of the "state of the art" of manpower and employment planning, those related to the derivation of a conclusive conceptual framework for human resources management within the context of Africa development profile, needs and objectives have also made modest the gain from national efforts. These and other impediments will have to be redressed if the process of human resources management is to be made more effective.

III Conclusions and Policy Implications

9. What emerges from above with regards to the nature, status and scope of human resources planning and programming in Africa is an encouraging picture. In the first instance the need to establish appropriate institutional arrangements to administer the process for ensuring national development seems to have been felt by African governments. Additionally, though much work is yet to be done, an institutional and operational framework for an overall human resources management system has begun to evolve in many African States. Given this encouraging picture, and given the presence of a series of constraining factors, which could hinder the process, two major conclusions could be drawn.

10. First and foremost, efforts made so far at improving human resources management in Africa would need to be integrated, intensified and sustained on a systematic basis within the context of national and regional development. This would not only call for the designing of appropriate human resources planning and programming packages that contain consistent goals and objectives along side with clear statements on the steps, programmes and techniques required for initiating and implementing these goals and strategies, but also call for sound institutional and staffing capabilities to deliver the outputs. Secondly, more concrete steps will have to be taken at the national level to broaden the scope and relevancy of manpower and employment planning and programming. This would begin with ensuring an effective process for human resources policy planning, policy formulation and policy implementation within the framework, objectives and strategies of other development policies. Next, it would require greater co-operation between member States within the region and between the region and the international community within the spirit of APPER and UN-PAAPED.

In the light of the above conclusions, it stands to reason for one to suggest that immediate action would need to be taken where necessary with the view to ensuring that national manpower and employment planning and programming exercises are re-inforced by clear national statements on the steps, strategies and techniques for initiating and implementing human resources management activities. Accordingly, three specific suggestions with far reaching policy implications, are made:

- (i) National and regional efforts made so far towards the establishment of the required institutional arrangements will have to be sustained and intensified;
- (ii) specific policies with respect to manpower and employment planning and programming as well as to the strengthening of manpower management institutional structures, interrelationships and linkages within the aggregate development planning system, will have to be clearly stated and vigorously pursued;
- (iii) steps will have to be taken to ensure managerial, professional and operational capabilities within the created institutions with emphasis placed on the specification of clear and measurable work programme together with unit terms of references; the initiation of staff development and utilization policies and programmes; and the administration and periodic evaluation of such policies and programmes.



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PROGRESS IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION, PRODUCTIVITY
ENHANCEMENT AND CO-OPERATION IN THE USE
OF HIGH-LEVEL MANPOWER

PROGRESS IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION, PRODUCTIVITY
ENHANCEMENT AND CO-OPERATION IN THE USE
OF HIGH-LEVEL MANPOWER

A. Introduction

1. The economic crisis of the first half of the 1980s took its toll on Africa's human resources. Open unemployment shot up from 12 million workers or 5.3% of the labour force in 1980 to 22 million or over 10.2% of the African labour force in 1985. Underemployment which stood at 40% affecting 50 million people in 1980 increased to affect about 48% of the labour force or 95 million people in 1985. The African refugee population surpassed the 5 million mark by 1985 and by the beginning of that year over 12 million farmers, pastoralists and rural workers were displaced. The brain drain from Africa also increased. Some 70,000 middle and high-level Africans were estimated to have migrated to the developed regions of the world by 1987.

2. The overall poor economic performance of the African economy since 1980 and the resultant productivity decreases in all production sectors had a negative impact not only on the demand for labour but also on marginal worker productivity. Workers were laid off from establishments in the private sector, the parastatals and government and a good number of production enterprises had to close down their operations.

3. The serious decline of the African economy in the first half of the 1980s was brought about by external and internal factors. The origins of the crisis include severe balance-of-payments problems, declining export earnings and the dramatic increases in external indebtedness which placed great strains on investments in development projects and brought about foreign exchange difficulties whose effects had a serious impact on the regions ability to procure production inputs for agriculture and industry. The crisis was triggered off by adverse climatic conditions which led to drought and desertification, severely affecting production in agriculture and impacting negatively on other sectors such as transport, industry and energy production. The resultant decline in gross output had a devastating effect on employment, incomes and overall levels of productivity within the economy.

4. 1985 saw the beginning of collective efforts of African Governments to chart out strategies for recovery and for laying the foundations for sustained development within the region. At its 21st ordinary session, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity which convened in Addis Ababa in July 1985, decided on the medium- and short-term priority measures to be pursued to revive the African economy within the five years between 1986 and 1990. These measures are contained in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 (APPER). APPER doubled up as the framework within

which another important document, Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis, was adopted by the first Extraordinary Session of the ECA Conference of Ministers and the 15th Extraordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, which were held in Addis Ababa from 28-29 and 30-31 March 1986 respectively. This Submission was presented to the 13th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was convened in New York in May/June 1986 and which adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UN-PAERD). All three strategy documents are based on the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, in that they define the actions required for rehabilitating the African economy during 1986-1990 so that they could move more rapidly towards attaining the objectives of the LPA and the FAL.

5. By 1986, most African countries had put in place measures for structural adjustment and development policy reforms. These measures, together with the crisis conditions that preceded them, have inevitably had an effect on the utilization of human resources in Africa. In many respects, the effects have so far been negative in that they have depressed employment and accentuated underemployment levels, have reduced incomes and increased hardship in many African countries. This paper will review the record in respect of the impact of the crisis and the resultant structural adjustment and policy reform measures, on employment productivity and the general utilization of human resources, with a view to proposing measures to dampen the shock on human resources.

2. The Economic Crisis: Background to the Problem 1/

6. The great drought of 1983/84 severely affected agricultural production and the general performance of the African economy. It struck at a time when an adverse international economic climate made it difficult for African economies to sustain the growth momentum of the 1970s. The exogenous factors that exacerbated the crisis include the collapse in commodity prices, adverse terms of trade, sharp declines in official development assistance, high interest rates, increased protectionism and a

1/ For a fuller treatment of the origins and causes of the crisis, see the "Special Memorandum by the ECA Conference of Ministers on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis" UNECA, Addis Ababa, July 1984, "Second Special Memorandum by the ECA Conference of Ministers on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis," UNECA, Addis Ababa, 1985, UNECA, "Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis", Addis Ababa, 1986. United Nations, "Critical Economic Situation in Africa", New York, 1984, Adebayo Adedeji "Africa's Current Economic Crisis and Prospects for 1985", Addis Ababa, December 1984.

heavy debt burden and debt-servicing obligations. Internally, the crisis was edged on by serious structural deficiencies: imbalances between urban development and rural poverty, disparities in income distribution, poor management of financial and human resources, political instability etc.

7. Although climatic conditions were the main reason for the sharp decline in agricultural production, the sector itself by its very structure and production mode provided all the preconditions for a crisis. It is characterized by an overdependence on rain-fed agriculture which makes it vulnerable to erratic climatic conditions. Investments in agriculture are inadequate and what little is made, goes to support cash crop production to the detriment of food production. Incentives to farmers are generally inadequate also, as is institutional support such as the provision of extension services, marketing and distribution etc. There is a very low rate of application of science and technology in this sector and the provision of production inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, seeds etc. is greatly inadequate. With all these constraints, food self-sufficiency ratios dropped from 98 per cent in the 1960s to 86 per cent in the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1984, these ratios dropped even further as food production increased by only one per cent, against a population growth rate of 2.92 per annum. Food imports therefore skyrocketed and by 1984 25 per cent of all food imports came in the form of food aid. All told agricultural output stagnated as did agricultural exports, affecting Africa's share in world trade for many commodities.

8. The industrial sector, including the extractive industries also performed poorly. This had its structural origins: the import-substitution industrial strategies of African countries failed to create the necessary linkages with the regions natural resource base and developed a very heavy reliance on imported inputs to function. The economic crisis and the resultant shortages of foreign exchange made it difficult for inputs to be procured to keep industrial establishments going at full capacity. Capacity utilization therefore dropped drastically and industrial output declined dramatically by 1984.

9. Other sectors of the African economy also registered serious declines. Energy production, transport and communication, marketing and distribution systems all performed badly as a result of the economic crisis.

10. The productivity declines that were registered between 1983 and 1985 in African economies severely depressed the demand for labour. Open unemployment increased to affect some 22 million workers in 1985, from a mere 12 million four years earlier, where as the numbers of Africa's underemployed increased from 50 mil-

tion in 1980 to over 35 million in 1985. ^{2/} Drought and desertification and the consequent loss of production inputs such as seed and drought animals displaced some five million farmers, pastoralists and rural workers from production activities. The destruction of agricultural soils and vegetal cover, also left a large number of rural producers with very little to do by way of agricultural production activities. Among the side effects of these adverse conditions was the dramatic increase in the levels of morbidity and malnutrition. An estimated 30 million persons, of whom about 12.3 million were agricultural workers, suffered from malnutrition and ill-health. ^{3/}

11. Although agricultural workers were the hardest hit by the effects of the crisis, those in the formal sector did not go unscathed. Output decreases in industry and service establishments depressed the demand for labour. Employment levels either stagnated or declined as establishments laid off workers or put a freeze on employment. Worker productivity also declined as a consequence of the shortages of production inputs: energy, spare parts, raw materials etc.

12. The informal sector, employer of last resort, thrived in the face of these adverse employment conditions. Millions of workers sought refuge within it, as a source of livelihood. Because of the unfavourable employment conditions within the African economy, underemployment levels in the informal sector are assumed to have increased on account of the depressed wage levels and declines in marginal worker productivity.

13. As mentioned earlier, the economic crisis and its pervasive debilitating effects on the socioeconomic fabric of African countries has called for policy shifts, a reordering of priorities and the adoption of measures to rehabilitate the African economy to ensure full recovery. Almost all African Governments have put in place, policy reform measures, structural adjustment, stabilization or economic recovery programmes. The structural adjustment programmes have invariably been supported by the major international financing institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. In some countries, these programmes have temporarily replaced the national development plan. It is through these programmes that "development" policies in many African countries have been pursued in recent years and it is these programmes that will influence socioeconomic development priorities for the rest of this decade. It is therefore fitting that a review of performance in the area of human resources utilization be undertaken within the framework of the structural adjustment measures being pursued by African countries.

^{2/} ECA "The crisis of unemployment and human resources management," E/ECA/CM 11/33, Addis Ababa, 1985

^{3/} United Nations op. cit. table 5

C Structural Adjustment, Economic Recovery and the Utilization of Human Resources

14 The financial requirements for economic recovery have driven African Governments to seek assistance from the major financial institutions: World Bank and the IMF. These and other international financial institutions insist on the formulation and implementation of structural adjustment and stabilization programmes, by the needy African governments. The adoption and implementation of these programmes are a precondition for continued access to the several facilities made available by these institutions, particularly the IMF to developing countries. These programmes call for certain financial, fiscal and economic measures to be implemented by the beneficiary government. They call for measures such as currency devaluation, the removal of subsidies on certain consumer goods, reduction in government spending, more privatization of enterprises, cost recovery and cost containment in the social services, tax reforms to increase government revenue etc. These measures are supposed to increase efficiency in demand management and in supply side and exchange rate adjustment. Demand management is intended to contain public expenditure while increasing government revenue. Supply side measures are meant to stimulate production and productivity whereas exchange rate adjustments (devaluation) are expected to raise the domestic value of production and discourage imports thereby reducing the demand for foreign exchange and correct the external imbalance.

15 In the application of these measures African Governments have had to sacrifice investments in development activities and particularly in the social sectors resulting in substantial cuts in social and economic development programmes. The employment generation opportunities foregone through a reduction in development investment amounted to a loss of an estimated one and one half million new permanent jobs between 1985 and mid 1987 in the formal sector alone. The construction industry, which traditionally has provided great employment opportunities for the semi-skilled and the unskilled was hard hit thus reducing its employment generation capacities substantially.

16 Apart from these opportunity costs, there have been conscious moves to reduce employment levels especially in the public sector enterprises and in government. Guinea reduced public sector employment by laying off 30,000 workers in the public services in 1987. ^{4/} Morocco took steps to suppress 44,000 established posts in the public sector in 1983 but actually laid off 19,000

^{4/} Couraie, Alain: "FMI en Guinée: Un Programme très Contestable" Codesria, Africa Development Vol. 10, No. 1/2, 1985, p 167, also "West Africa", 27 March 1987.

employees by 1984. For the same reason, thousands of workers lost their jobs in the Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali and Togo. The layoffs were particularly well-publicized in Nigeria. Between 1980 and 1983 some one million workers were retrenched from industrial establishments. The Nigerian Manufacturers Association reported that between July 1985 and July 1987, 20,000 workers were laid off in industry. In the public service, 57,000 employees were retrenched between January and September 1985. 6/

17 Added to the direct reductions was the public sector employment freeze imposed. Some African countries have openly announced this freeze but most have simply implemented it quietly. An estimated one hundred thousand job opportunities are thus lost to the African workforce every year.

18 In addition to these cost containment measures, some countries have imposed a freeze on wages. This has been the case in Niger, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Togo. 7/ They have at the same time removed subsidies on essential consumer items such as energy and food thus passing on the full costs of these items to the consumer while prices of goods have increased. The following description of the situation in Tanzania summarizes the problem facing the African worker today. "Taken together with the devaluation (of the Tanzanian shilling) of over 35%, the increases in the price of petrol and the removal of the subsidy on Sembe (the local staple food), the (1984) budget represented a triple blow on those who depended on fixed income. For by 1981 when the minimum wage was Tz.shs 500 -, the minimum budget for food only per month for an average household of 4 persons was shs 900. By 1984, the minimum wage had been increased to shs 810., the real purchasing power of this was less than shs 100." 8/
19 In Zambia, real wages fell on average by between 10% and 15% per annum between 1980 and 1986. "Initial estimates suggest that in 1985, for a family of five, the poverty datum line - the subsistence minimum - was above K200 a month, almost twice the average wage." 9/

20 Reductions in public spending have not been confined only to the areas of employment and wages. There have been direct reductions of government expenditure in the social sectors:

5/ El Malki, Hahid. "Crise économique et financière - Austerité et FMI - le cas du Maroc" Codesria, op cit, p.95

6/ See West Africa, 21 September 1987, p.1833

7/ See ECA "The Implications of Structural Adjustment and Stabilization Programmes on Long term Growth and Development in African Least Developed Countries", E/CN.4/LDCs 7/Exp.5/4, Addis Ababa, 1987, p. 7.

8/ Campbell, Morace, "The Budget and the People: Reflections on the 1984 Budget in Tanzania", Codesria, Op Cit, pp 82 & 83.

9/ Makgetha, Neva S. "Theoretical and Practical Implications of IMF Conditionality in Zambia", Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 24 no. 3, 1986, p.482

education, health and transport. Some of the costs of these services have been passed on to the consumer - the worker.

21 It can thus be seen that the structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes have caused and are continuing to cause serious difficulties for Africa's human resources. With the investment and employment policies being pursued, an estimated 1.8 million to 2 million new jobs have been lost in the African economy. This loss of employment generation opportunities has affected mainly the new labour force entrants, most of whom are primary school graduates. Increasingly, however, secondary school and university graduates are being affected. In 1984, the Federal Government of Nigeria announced that "although reliable statistics on unemployment are not available, the unemployed include not only secondary school leavers, but also graduates of universities and other institutions of higher learning. The unemployment of a growing number of graduates poses a serious social problem."^{1_0/} A graduate employment tracer study conducted in 1985 showed that only 10% of the Nigerian university graduates who had completed their national service had secured jobs one year after. 10 years earlier, full 73 per cent had found jobs within three months of their graduation.^{1_1/} The problem in Nigeria has worsen even further today, but it is typical of the trends in all African countries.

22 It must be mentioned, however, that the federal Government of Nigeria is taking steps to tackle its unemployment problem. Unemployment is reported to have reached the 3 million mark in May 1987. The National Directorate of Employment has set up a National Open Apprenticeship Programme through which the unemployed will be trained for self-employment. It is envisaged that 86 thousand unemployed youth will benefit from training through this programme. Fifty million Naira have been set aside for this purpose. Added to this programme, there is the Special Public Works Programme under which youths will be mobilized for road construction, tree planting and various maintenance work etc. There is also the small-scale industries programme through which youth will be assisted to set up their own business; and other programmes to create employment in the agriculture sector.

23 The declines in the real value of wages themselves have serious implications for worker productivity. Some country studies have shown that the average real wage in many African countries has declined over the years, in some cases by as much as 40% in the last five years. Real per capita income on the continent itself has been on the decline by an average annual

^{1_0/} Federal Military Government of Nigeria, The Blue Book, June 1984.

^{1_1/} Folayan Ojo "Employment Generation and Productivity Enhancement Strategies in Nigeria" (mimeo)

rate of at least 11 per cent since 1980 ^{1_2/} In Africa, wage rates do not necessarily reflect worker productivity. They are often established by rather arbitrary criteria, with little or no consideration for the value of the worker's output or the time and intensity of work required to produce it. Now the declining real wage levels in African countries will affect motivation, dedication, efficiency and output is a subject for serious study at the country level. African Governments should, in addition, be wary of the political consequences, which have begun to materialize in some countries.

24 The supply side measures which aim at creating incentives to boost production appear to have had a more positive effect among agricultural producers. Most governments have increased producer prices for the major agricultural commodities. This incentive, added to the favourable weather conditions since 1985, has resulted in an increase in the output of cereals in 1986. In countries like Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Chad, Cape Verde, cereals output increased by over 10 per cent over their 1985 levels. Swaziland, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia have also reported good harvests. ^{1_3/}

25 There is little evidence that the currency devaluations the most popular of the exchange rate adjustment measures - have achieved their expected impact in the productive sectors of the economy. Granted, the curb on demand has meant a greater availability of foreign exchange for the procurement of production inputs. Consequently, rehabilitation of the manufacturing sector has met with some success in many African countries. While this may have led to an improvement in respect of underemployment and productivity, it is not certain that it has helped to reduce unemployment. In agriculture and mining, its positive effects are doubtful, because "to begin with, devaluation is likely to be an ineffective response to an external payments problem because as primary commodity exporters, African (countries) are price-takers on world markets. In most of these countries, the output of primary products is fairly inelastic and insensitive to changes in export prices. With an inelastic supply of goods to export, their earnings from export could generally be expected to remain unchanged." ^{1_4/} Devaluations, therefore, are not likely to stimulate output in the major economic sectors in Africa, to the extent that this would increase demand for labour.

D Employment, Productivity and the African Priorities for Recovery

^{1_2/} See United Nations, "Critical Economic Situation in Africa" Op.Cit. p. 4

^{1_3/} Adebayo Adedeji, "A Preliminary Assessment of the Performance of the African Economy in 1986 and Prospects for 1987", Addis Ababa, January 1987, p. 5

^{1_4/} ECA "The Implications of Structural Adjustment", Op.Cit. p. 5

24. Notwithstanding the structural adjustment and stabilization programmes, African Governments have indicated a set of actions which they intend to pursue within the context of the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action to achieve economic recovery. These measures were first articulated in July 1985 in "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990" (APPER) which was adopted by the 21st ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU. They are expected to pave the way for national and collective self-reliant and self-sustained growth and development.^{1_5/} Accordingly, APPER places top-most priority on the rehabilitation of the food and agriculture sector by instituting measures to boost food production and to increase that sector's resilience in the face of drought, desertification and the vagaries of the weather and by providing various incentives to producers and increasing the quantity and quality of agricultural support services. APPER also identifies other sectors where development would impact positively on the rehabilitation and growth of agriculture, particularly transport and communications, distribution and marketing systems and rural energy supply. The development and utilization of human resources is given prominence. APPER asserts that "the attainment of the objectives of the LPA and the FAL depends in the final analysis, on the development of a wide range of human resources required for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programmes covering the entire spectrum and sectoral activities in the development process."^{1_6/} APPER thus recommends action to step up manpower development activities and to institute measures that would reduce the "brain drain" and ensure a much better utilization of Africa's human resources.

25. The action measures recommended in APPER were amplified in "Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis." The Submission estimated the dollar requirements for the implementation of the objectives of APPER in all the priority sectors in the five years between 1986-1990. In agriculture, the estimated requirement was \$57.4 billion to be used to increase food production, develop and improve arable lands, develop animal and livestock production, increase mechanization of agricultural production, improve storage and marketing, develop agricultural research and extension services, strengthen water resource management and intensify programmes of reafforestation and drought and desertification control. US\$60.1 billion will go to the development of other sectors in support of agriculture. These include the rehabilitation and development of agro-based industries for stepped-up production of agricultural tools and implements, fertilizers and pesticides, spareparts etc.; the development of transport and communication, especially rural and access roads; and the improvement of distribution and marketing systems. US\$3.4 billion will be required for drought and

^{1_5/} OAU "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990", Addis Ababa, 1985 p.1

^{1_6/} *op cit*, p.3

desertification control programmes and US\$7.2 billion will go towards improving the development and utilization of human resources. Programmes in the area of human resources will concentrate on educational curricula reform to streamline education with development needs and to render Africa's human resources more amenable to being utilized more efficiently within enabling socio-political environments, such that underemployment, unemployment and the brain drain are significantly reduced.

28 At the 13th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was convened in New York in May/June 1986 to deliberate on Africa's social and economic problems, the international community pledged its support to the African initiatives for economic recovery and agreed to enter into a "shared partnership" with African countries in taking the actions necessary for recovery and development. This support is expressed in the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990" (UNPAAERD) in which African Governments undertook to implement certain reform measures and the international community promised to assist not only in the implementation of these measures but also in ameliorating the international economic environment in favour of Africa's rapid economic recovery.

29 The measures agreed in APPER, the Submission and UNPAAERD have far-reaching implications for the utilization of human resources in Africa. An implementation of the recovery programmes in all the sectors would have very salutary effects on growth within the economy which will stimulate the demand for labour and boost employment levels within the economy. The measures envisaged for the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector are themselves favourable to employment generation. Afforestation programmes, soil and water conservation schemes, livestock development projects etc. could create more opportunities for labour to be gainfully employed, and at the same time would set the stage for the agricultural work force to be more productive. The investments in sectors in support of agriculture would call for increased activities in civil works projects - the construction of dams, roads, culverts, storage facilities etc. - which in themselves are highly labour-intensive. The implementation of recovery programmes in these areas will thus create a large number of rural jobs while at the same time lead to higher levels of productivity in agriculture. And the provision of seeds, fertilizer and improved production tools and implements will make agricultural production more efficient and worker productivity much higher.

30 In the manufacturing sector, rehabilitation of industrial enterprises has already started showing signs of success. With the greater availability of foreign exchange, it has been possible to secure more raw materials, spareparts and production inputs to raise capacity utilization in many industries. While this has certainly rendered the output of the industrial worker higher, it is not certain that it has contributed substantially to

increasing the demand for labour. Albeit if output growth is sustained over the life of APPER and the UNPAAERD, the demand for labour will, in the medium and long term, be boosted, not only within the industrial sector but also in the economy as a whole.

32. It is estimated that the total investment of US\$28.5 billion in the Recovery Programme will create between 2.58 million and 3.23 million permanent jobs in the African economy. The success of the programmes will reduce under-employment levels to about the 1980 level of 60 million workers.

33. In 1987, ECA undertook an evaluation of progress in the implementation of APPER and the UN-PAAERD in African countries. The study sought to ascertain the extent to which policies, programmes and strategies of APPER and UN-PAAERD have been integrated into national development plans or structural adjustment and stabilization programmes, whether the targets of APPER and UN-PAAERD have been adequately reflected in the national budgets, and the extent to which external assistance has been oriented towards the priorities of APPER and the UNPAAERD. 97 per cent of African governments had, according to the study, incorporated the priorities of APPER and UNPAAERD into their national development plans whereas 90 per cent had these reflected in their budgets. Most of the countries had taken measures to increase the inflow of funds from external sources.

34. The immediate measures embarked upon to implement APPER and the UN-PAAERD in the food and agriculture sector called for the creation and/or maintenance of national emergency preparedness mechanisms, the establishment of early warning and food security systems. About half the African countries had implemented or were in the process of implementing these measures. The requirements in the short and medium terms were to increase the level of investment in food and agriculture, strengthen agricultural credit institutions, undertake land reform and reclamation and encourage rural savings. The survey revealed that about 65% of the countries had begun meeting this requirement.

35. The impact of these measures on human resources development can only be a positive one. For example, the land reform and reclamation measures will significantly increase farm acreage and provide more opportunities to the farmer to be more productive. This could depend, of course on other supportive measures. UN-PAAERD and APPER had foreseen this need and had recommended measures such as more mechanization and modernization of

1/2/ It is estimated that an investment of between US\$35,000 and US\$50,000 will create one permanent job. This is lower than in other regions of the world, because of the higher labour intensity in production within the region.

3/ ECA: "Progress in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990)" DOC. E/ECA/CM 13/S Addis Ababa 1987

agricultural production, the application of modern production inputs and techniques, more agronomical research, the development and use of high yielding seeds etc.; the improvement of transport, communication and storage and distribution systems. More than 60 per cent of the countries surveyed indicated that they had begun implementing this recommendation and some 80% of the countries had already taken action to rehabilitate and develop feeder roads, access and service roads and small bridges. This suggests that employment opportunities through the implementation of these public works projects are being increasingly generated for the semi-skilled and unskilled for the most part, and at the same time the conditions are being created for labour productivity levels to be raised.

35 Most countries have embarked on action to implement the recommendation to rehabilitate other sectors in support of agriculture. They are taking steps to improve the internal distribution systems, carry out reafforestation programmes, control deforestation, soil erosion, salination and overgrazing etc. The investments planned for the implementation of these activities will augur well for job creation and the enhancement of worker productivity.

36 In the field of human resources, the survey revealed that the implementation of the APPER and UN-PAAERD recommendations were still modest: only 53 per cent reported that they were developing and encouraging indigenous entrepreneurs.^{1_9/} The measures for reducing dependence on outside experts rely on training for the most part. A small number of countries have instituted programmes for the involvement of women in development and for rural development to stem the rural/urban drift.

37 As concerns measures to reverse the brain drain, very little appears to have been done. 3 per cent of the countries were providing economic incentives to discourage the brain drain, and another 3 per cent were giving both economic and political incentives for that purpose. 17 per cent were improving conditions of work whereas 10 per cent were ensuring good working conditions and providing political and economic incentives at the same time.^{2_0/}

38 There is no doubt that if the UN-PAAERD and APPER are implemented in the medium term the demand for labour will be substantially increased and the dramatic decline in levels of employment within the region will be arrested. It is certain also that they will decrease levels of underemployment. Their real impact on poverty alleviation in the medium term is, however, not certain, in the face of the structural adjustment measures being undertaken concurrently by about 30 African countries.

39 Opportunities for promoting private indigenous entrepreneurs and employers in the informal sector can also be created through

^{1_9/} op cit, p.12

^{2_0/} Ibid. p.9

the implementation of APPER and the UNPAAERD. These agents have strong potentials for employment creation and those in the informal sector particularly are active in training, the production of intermediate goods and the provision of incomes to millions of Africa's work force. The investments envisaged for recovery should also be directed towards stimulating their growth so that they are able to absorb more of Africa's labour force.

F The Crisis, Recovery and the Brain Drain

40. There are today an estimated 70,000 middle- and high-level Africans living in Western Europe and North America. These are Africans who have received at least three years of post-secondary education in colleges, polytechnics and universities. More than half of them hold at least two university degrees and most of them are qualified in fields in which serious shortfalls are recorded within the continent: engineering, science, technology, agriculture, management, medicine etc.

41. Although the outflows are directed towards the developed market economies of Western Europe and North America, the oil-rich countries of Western Asia serve as an important magnet for attracting middle- and high-level manpower from certain Afro-Arab countries. Hundreds of thousands of such workers - Moroccans, Tunisians, Egyptians, Sudanese and Somalis - have been drawn over by the oil-induced economic boom in the countries of Western Asia.

42. Only 14,000 African scientists, engineers, doctors and teachers were known to be employed in the USA and parts of Western Europe in 1975 ^{2.1/}. The economic declines and the social deterioration that have plagued the continent since then are responsible for having significantly worsened the situation today and propelled the drift of skilled manpower away from the region. With the more difficult conditions of work which were brought about by the shortages of tools, equipment and inputs in industry, the health sector, agriculture, higher education institutions and state-owned enterprises, professionals and highly skilled workers saw their effectiveness being constrained by the day. In one African country, industrial capacity utilization fell by 27 per cent between 1980 and 1983 due largely to these production problems ^{2.2/}. In another, surgeons in a large government hospital could not easily perform operations because of a shortage of surgical gloves. The Government of one West African country allocated no research funds to the national university for three years. These examples illustrate the difficult working conditions which Africa's middle and high-level manpower have had to face through the years of the crisis. But in general, the inadequacy of equipment and working tools in many an African

^{2.1/} See ILO, *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs, A One-World Problem*, Geneva 1976, p. 131.

^{2.2/} See ECA, "The Crisis of Unemployment", Op Cit, p. 5.

country makes work more difficult, less exciting and fulfilling, and contributes to frustrating professionals to the point of their wanting to seek alternatives elsewhere.

43. Added to this problem, has been the one of declining real incomes. Whereas nominal values of incomes have remained constant, prices have been rising. Average price increases were in the order of 18.9 per cent between 1980 and 1981, 13.6 per cent between 1981 and 1982 and from 1982 to 1983, 12.3 per cent. They shot-up to 21 per cent in 1984 and 11.7 per cent in 1985.2_3/ Thus by 1984 the real value of a Ghanaian doctor's monthly salary was the equivalent of US\$42, a Ugandan permanent secretary's was \$40 and a University professor's in Sierra Leone was \$66.2_4/

44. When incomes are low, resulting in hardships and an inability of the individual to fulfil at least his basic needs, it is natural for him to look for alternative sources of income elsewhere. Middle- and high-level personnel are typically those who have the option to seek alternatives elsewhere, invariably in the developed market economies of the world.

45. The social environment has deteriorated also, following the economic crisis. Some indicators of social decline are the absence of certain amenities, difficult housing conditions, educational and health problems, transportation inadequacies, shortages of essential consumer goods etc. In many African countries, these indicators are quite visible even to the casual observer. They increase hardship and stress and act as a "push" factor. Qualified Africans with a choice will naturally, tend to opt out of living under such difficult conditions.

46. Another very strong push factor has been the political problems which some countries in the region have gone through. The scores of cross-border conflicts, wars, coups d'etat and ethnic skirmishes which have occurred in Africa since the 1960s have created many refugees, and have propelled the flight of skilled Africans to more stable political environments.

47. The need to send African students abroad for education and training also contributes to the brain drain. Most of these highly skilled Africans who are abroad, left the continent to pursue their studies further in the first place. There is evidence that a good percentage of Africans who undertake studies in Western Europe and North America tend not to be inclined to return upon completion of their studies. Mali estimates that 15 per cent of its nationals studying in France do not return.2_5/ The insufficiency of educational opportunities in Africa therefore also contributes to the problem of the brain drain.

2_3/ See ECA Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1982-1983, Addis Ababa 1984, p. 87; 1985-1986, p. 64.

2_4/ See "International Migration, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, March 1986.

2_5/ See Jeune Afrique 16, 61/26 June 1985, p. 35.

48. All told, socioeconomic difficulties act as an accelerator of the brain drain. An ECA study has shown that rates of outmigration correlate positively with socioeconomic conditions. In Sudan, during the difficult period of the second half of the 1970s, rates of outmigration were recorded as follows: 1972, 545; 1973, 1160; 1974, 1168 and 1975, 10058. The study estimate that the flow was much heavier in subsequent years because "the situation keeps on worsening" 2.6/. In the 1970s more than half the professional and technical manpower in Uganda fled the Amin regime because of political repression and economic hardships. In Rhodesia outmigration rates picked up correspondingly with the escalation of the war of liberation, and by 1986, Ghana had lost more than half its medical doctors to the U.S.A., Western Europe and the Gulf States.

49. There is no doubt that the economic crisis and the traumas of recovery, have propelled the flight of skills from African economies in the last five years. Although one of the measures for recovery is aimed at arresting the trend, some lag should be expected before these measures, if implemented at all, take effect. The brain drain will, therefore continue or even increase in the next five years, given the persistence of the present socioeconomic conditions and barring the institution of restrictive measures within the continent and in the receiving countries.

5. Cooperation in the use of High-Level Manpower

50. The large numbers of middle- and high-level manpower that have emigrated from Africa, still have a role to play in the economic development of the continent. Expatriate technical assistance employment in Africa has been growing, while vacancy rates in many African countries have remained high. Shortages in some skill areas in one country can be redressed by using the surplus in these same areas from another country.

51. Yet of all the attempts to formalize co-operation among countries of the region in the various fields of development, co-operation in the utilization of human resources has been the weakest. As far back as 1973, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU adopted the African Declaration on Co-operation, Development and Economic Independence in which, with respect to sharing of human resources among African countries, they undertook to (i) facilitate the free movement of persons essential for the exchange of ideas and economic integration and give priority to co-operation in the exchange of professional manpower and skilled and unskilled labour among African countries. (ii) take appropriate measures to put an end to the brain drain in Africa and to prompt qualified Africans living abroad to return with a

2.6/ ECA "A Survey on the Problems of the Brain Drain in North African Countries: Monograph on the Outflow of Qualified Specialists and Skilled Manpower: The Case of Egypt and the Sudan". Addis Ababa, December 1975

lead to the rapid phasing out of technical assistance from outside Africa

52. The Heads of State and Government decided to establish an "Intra-African Technical Co-operation Bureau", whose objectives would be (i) enabling African countries with a sufficiency of skilled personnel to make this available to other African countries needing the services of such personnel, (ii) facilitating exchange of scientific and technical know-how as well as experiments and experiences relating to development among African countries, (iii) giving Africans the possibility of further developing their expertise by tackling problems in other African host countries, (iv) fostering the spirit of co-operation and solidarity among African countries.

53. The Intra-African Technical Co-operation Bureau was indeed established at OAU in 1974, but because of inadequate support from member States, it atrophied and has now died. Formal regional co-operation in the use of high-level manpower is still just a wish.

54. It must be mentioned, however, that there exist several bilateral arrangements between African countries for the sharing of manpower. Zimbabwe and Ghana have entered into an agreement through which the latter will supply the former with medical doctors. Nigeria provides Gambia with lawyers and the Sudan supplies a number of North African countries with skilled manpower.

55. More informal arrangements exist for the sharing of qualified personnel among African countries. Political and economic hardships have contributed to bringing this about. Out of more than four million African migrant workers and five million refugees on the continent today, a good percentage are middle- and high-level personnel.^{2/7} In this way Guineans are allowed to operate in the Senegalese economy, Chadians are employed in the Ivory Coast, Ugandans, in Kenyans and Ethiopians in Djibouti.

56. In spite of these existing arrangements, there is definitely the need to institute more formal mechanisms to promote the sharing of African expertise among African countries. This is dictated by the need to retain within the continent, as many prospective emigrants as possible, to contribute to recovery and development. Most skilled Africans migrate out of the region only as a last resort, but would have preferred to have sought opportunities in other African countries had they been assured of the ease of benefitting from these opportunities.

57. As far back as 1976, ECA started publishing a Directory of African Experts and consultancy organizations. The objective was to provide Governments an access to information on African experts whom they could employ within the continent, and to

2/7. See ECA: "International Migration in Africa: Past, Present and Future Prospects", Doc. ECA/PD/WS/1981/2. Addis Ababa, 1981.

reduce their need to hire the more expensive out-of-region experts. There is evidence that little use has been made of this Directory in African Governments' search for experts.

58. Mention must be made of the Southern African Migrant Labour System through which millions of Africans from the independent Southern African States bordering South Africa, are turned into cheap forms of labour. This situation has deteriorated over the years to the extent that the Migrant worker system is proving to be more of a liability than an asset to the development of the supplier States. The Southern African Labour Commission was created to grapple with this problem with the eventual objective of evolving alternatives that would result in reducing the dependence of its members on South Africa for the provision of employment for their nations. Although concrete results are yet to be realized, there is evidence that the Southern African countries are resolute in finding a permanent solution to the migrant worker problem.

59. In other parts of the continent, there has been an increasing tendency towards intolerance of other nationalities. Mass expulsion of workers has become more frequent. Apart from the hardship imposed on the individuals concerned, and the tensions generated between the countries involved, this expulsions have a negative impact on the need for cooperation in the sharing of skills within the region. African Governments should endeavour to make the free movement of people a more positive element in the collective development of their countries at both the sub-regional and the regional levels.

60. ECA has since 1982 been promoting a programme^{2.8/} aimed essentially at reversing the brain drain and at identifying highly skilled Africans living in Western Europe and North America with a view to returning them into jobs in any African country that would have them. Over three hundred and eighty vacancies which these skilled Africans could fill have been identified since 1984 in priority fields such as engineering, agriculture, health,

^{2.8/} The "Joint ECA/ICM Return of Skills Programme for Africa" has been in operation since 1982. Under this programme, ECA identifies vacancies in African countries and publishes them in North America and Western Europe. The Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) which is collaborating with ECA on this project, identifies suitable Africans in the countries of the North, whose CV's are sent to ECA. Biographical sketches are made of these candidates and published in "African Experts Available for Recruitment". This is circulated thrice yearly to all African countries. Prospective employers are free to call for the full CV's of interesting candidates, and if employment is decided between the two parties, the Programme then finances the return and resettlement of the new recruit. Resettlement assistance includes salary topping, purchase and shipment of working tools and equipment, insurance, etc.

natural and physical sciences, management sciences, animal sciences, industrial technology etc

51 More than 1000 qualified Africans have participated since the inception of the programmes and many requests for CV's of candidates picked out from the biographical sketches have been received by ECA. In 1986 alone, 180 such requests were received from African countries. Several hundred candidates have been placed in jobs in Africa between 1984 and 1986.

52 This programme holds great promise for the reversal of the brain drain in Africa. Unfortunately, it is not being exploited to its fullest by African Governments. Third level educational institutions are the most active participants in it, but increasingly the private sector is showing some interest. Government ministries and state owned enterprises do not as yet appear to show much interest.

5. Proposals for Practical Measures

53 By all accounts, little progress has been made in the areas of employment generation, productivity enhancement and co-operation in the use of high-level manpower within the region. The rising unemployment and underemployment levels within the African economy have been compounded by the withholding of investments in development activities which could have generated more employment opportunities for Africa's labour force. Other structural adjustment and stabilization measures have also contributed to constricting African employment markets. But even in the face of the recovery measures being implemented there are indeed possibilities to increase employment and reduce underemployment within the region. The following are some courses of action which may be considered for that purpose, as well as for increasing co-operation in the utilization of manpower within the region, and for reducing the brain drain from African economies.

(i) Implementing APPER and UN-PAAERD

54 As has been mentioned, the investments envisaged in the implementation of the priority programmes of recovery will create several million jobs. The actions reported by Member States as revealed in the ECA evaluation study should by now be decelerating the unemployment trends in African countries. Unemployment is still on the increase, probably on account of the structural adjustment and stabilization programmes taking precedence over the recovery programmes. If African countries should succeed in tackling the worsening human resources problems which they now face, they should conceive policies and programmes to dampen the effects of structural adjustment and stabilization on human resources while in no way jeopardizing the success of the recovery measures.

55 The measures recommended for the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector and for sectors in support of agriculture

have high employment generation potentials. Afforestation, soil and water conservation, the construction of small dams, feeder roads etc. will create much demand for labour which can be met from the excess in urban areas. The effort to restore agricultural production to food self-sufficiency levels, will also provide opportunities for a large proportion of the rural labour force to be more productive. This will no doubt have a positive effect on efforts to reduce underemployment. Pastoralists will be more gainfully employed if the measures for protecting the livestock population are implemented, and the expansion of areas under cultivation through irrigation, the arrest of soil erosion and desertification would render it easier for the growing rural labour force to be more easily absorbed in agricultural production activities. Other areas in which there is need for programmes to be implemented, such as fisheries development, forestry management and development etc. will create more labour demand and will contribute towards raising the levels of productivity of the work force.

66 Other measures envisaged within APPER and UN-PAAERD call for substantial investments in the production of farm tools and equipment, the development of rural industries, stepped-up agricultural R&D etc. The implementation of these measures will no doubt have a direct positive impact on employment not only in the agricultural sector, but also in other sectors such as manufacturing and services, and the rehabilitation of existing industries will have the short term effect of reducing underemployment in the industrial sector and create employment in the long run.

67 But African Governments must make a conscious effort to build into their recovery programmes elements that would promote the creation of employment and the reduction of underemployment in all sectors, otherwise recovery will be of little immediate benefit to Africa's labour force.

(ii) Dampening the effects of structural Adjustment and Stabilization Programmes on Human Resources Utilization and Productivity

68 The reductions in public sector expenditure, as advocated in the structural adjustment and stabilization measures are starving the social and economic sectors of substantial amounts of investments, which are now being used to finance recurrent expenditure. If these amounts had not been diverted, their use in financing development would have created the type of demand that would have been favourable to labour. On the other hand, African Governments have openly expressed their intention to implement the APPER and UN-PAAERD which call for total investments to the tune of US\$128.1 billion from 1986 to 1990. It is not clear how this intention will be reconciled with the structural adjustment and stabilization measures in force in many African countries.

69 The more immediate effects of these measures on human resources have to be very seriously tackled: the deep erosions of the workers' pay package, the freeze on public sector employment, the rampant layoffs, the removal of subsidies on essential consumer items at the same time that wages are frozen. These all have far-reaching implications for the productivity of the work force, not to mention the hardships they impose on the working poor. African Governments will soon have to decide whether these measures are worth the political and social costs of sacrificing the regions human resources to satisfy the needs of others. Action therefore has to be taken to arrest the real wage declines and to create a public investment climate that would increase employment generation opportunities within the region.

70 The demand for labour could be sustained at present levels or even increased through a programme of employment subsidies, where employers could be paid a certain amount of money to retain workers or to hire more labour. Public works schemes should also be considered as a means of providing gainful employment to the unemployed. In Benin, Ghana and Guinea, these schemes have been provided as a means of absorbing a large number of workers who had been laid off their jobs in the public services. Ghana has gone further by providing loans to displaced public sector workers to start businesses.2_9/

71 There is very serious doubt being cast over the effectiveness of currency devaluation in stimulating growth and in increasing labour demand, given the present structure of the African economy. The results of devaluation in African countries have been inflationary as they push up prices of imported goods and reduce capacity utilization in industries that are dependent on imported inputs3_0/ In this way they reduce employment generation capacities and cause hardship. African Governments will have to reconsider their policies on devaluation vis-a-vis its effects on human resources.

(iii). Reversing the Brain Drain

72 Any policies aimed at arresting the outflow of skilled manpower must first begin with an honest appraisal of the factors that bring it about. In Africa these factors are political, social and economic in nature. While it is difficult to advise African Governments on the political measures to be pursued to reduce the brain drain, it may be expedient to suggest some areas in which African Governments may wish to consider taking action.

73 The deteriorating socioeconomic conditions on the continent are responsible for speeding up the flight of skills from African

2_9/ See World Bank, Protecting the Poor During Periods of Adjustment, Staff Working Papers, Washington, D.C. 1977, p.15
3_0/ See ECA: "The Implications of Structural Adjustment", Op.Cit. pp.21-22 and 24

economies. Chronic underdevelopment is the primary cause of the brain drain. The Lagos Plan of Action has prescribed actions to remove the conditions that give rise to the persistence of the regions underdevelopment and to set in motion the process for attaining self-reliant and self-sustaining development within the continent. As a long-term objective, African Governments should evolve measures to increase the resilience of the African economy and strengthen its capacity to be self-reliant in the production of goods and services. Food security and self-sufficiency should be the primary objective of agricultural development policies and industrialization should serve to facilitate the integration of the various production sectors. Public institutions should be more development-oriented and a more positive socio-political ethos must be inculcated among Africa's policy makers and economic managers. These are the minimum immediate requirements for beginning the process of removing the conditions that have caused Africa's persistent under-development.

74 Existing money incentives policies tend to favour the brain drain from Africa. It has been argued that raising wage levels in African economies will result in the distortion of wage structures, the promotion of income and other inequalities, a curb in welfare spending and other socioeconomic imbalances. Be that as it may, the problem of the brain drain, which in effect amounts to the loss of skills, should be seen as a loss of a production input -- human resources -- to development. If an input is considered essential to the production of valuable goods and services then the cost of purchasing that input should be a secondary consideration, subsumed under its utility in getting the goods and services produced, especially where the economies concerned would have to pay a much higher price for the absence of that input. Such is the case in respect of human resources for development in Africa. The direct and the opportunity costs of the brain drain, justify instituting urgent measures to reverse it by providing more attractive monetary and other incentives to the continent's skilled men and women.

75 Working conditions should also be improved. Equipment, tools and production inputs should be made available to production and "knowledge" workers so as to allow them to carry out their work with ease and efficiency. Intellectuals and academics should be provided a more enabling and less stressful environment, as well as the resources that would make them function with greater effectiveness.

76 The management of human resources should itself be greatly improved, so that nepotism, graft and ethnicism do not continue to determine the system of rewards, and so that Africa's human resources are motivated towards higher levels of productivity.

77 African Governments should provide more opportunities for education and training, and increase resource allocations to the middle and higher education sector to improve the quality of teaching and learning within it. This would help to reduce the

need for large numbers of Africans to seek educational opportunities abroad and would decrease the chances of a good percentage of such students staying away.

78 African Governments should show greater interest in participating in the Joint ECA/ICM Return of Skills programme for Africa, for the promise it holds for assisting them in identifying highly qualified Africans in specialized fields for employment in key areas. A greater involvement in this programme will obviate the need for hiring expensive expatriate personnel.

(iv) Strengthening Co-operation Among African Countries in the Utilization of Human Resources

79 While the Joint ECA/ICM Return of Skills Programme for Africa promotes the vertical flow of skills from the North, no formal regional arrangements as yet exist for within region skill exchanges. The OAU initiatives to formalize cooperation for this purpose have borne no fruit and the Bureau setup to administer the exchange programme has evaporated into thin air. African governments should consider providing the resources required for ECA to initiate action on their behalf to create a programme for within region exchange of skilled Africans. The Directory of African Experts and Consultancy organizations which ECA has been publishing since 1976, was meant to facilitate the use of more African experts in development projects. More use ought to be made of this Directory by Governments wishing to intensify co-operation in the use of African professionals.

(v) Strengthening Employment Planning Capabilities

80 The bleak prospects facing the region in the area of employment generation to meet the demands of a growing labour force, require an immediate change of attitudes to questions of employment, incomes and productivity. The African planner tends not to be too preoccupied with the employment effects of development investment. Too often employment is considered only as a side effect of growth, rather than the objective itself of growth. Little wonder therefore that the high levels of unemployment and underemployment have today turned out to be the fruits to be reaped from past development planning practices in African countries.

81 While ministries of labour continue to concentrate on their custodial function -- works welfare, trade union concerns, arbitration, contract negotiation, enforcement of labour legislation -- there appears to be a reluctance on their part to develop their capabilities to plan and monitor employment trends within their economies. Unless the capability is developed, so that employment creation emerges more positively as an objective of overall planning, the region will continue to be confronted with difficulties in fully utilizing its growing labour force.

82 Although some countries have set up committees and commissions on employment -- Kenya and Nigeria notably -- much more than an ad-hoc arrangement of this type is required to battle the problems of unemployment and underemployment. A permanent structure within government must be set up to monitor employment levels within industry, enforce government policies on employment, particularly with the multinationals which are notorious for their regular flouting of these policies, and monitor employment trends with a view to promoting the emergence of situations which would be favourable to labour.

Conclusion

83 The economic crisis triggered off a crisis of unemployment and underemployment, making it extremely difficult for Africa's human resources to be utilized productively and causing extreme hardships for Africa's workforce. The recovery measures advocated in APPER and UN-PAAERD are potentially most favourable to ameliorating the employment situation within the continent. But the prevailing structural adjustment and stabilization programmes seem to have had the upper hand so far in many African countries. Thus, while underemployment levels in agriculture have been reduced because of the good rains in the last two years, open unemployment levels in the formal wage sector of African economies have increased on account of the stringency measures of the structural adjustment and stabilization programmes being implemented. Although African Governments have reported an impressive rate of implementation of APPER and UN-PAAERD, the effects on employment do not so far support that claim. The investment of US\$128.1 billion over the life of APPER and UN-PAAERD will not only ensure the full economic recovery of the region, but will also in the process generate millions of jobs which will help to alleviate the suffering caused by the crisis.

84 There is a growing imperative for African Governments to regard these investments as a way of alleviating the suffering of a large number of jobless Africans and to retain this as one major objective of recovery. This is important not only for reasons of productivity increase, but also to rebuild the work ethic in African societies which many young Africans are beginning to lose on account of their being jobless for long periods of time.

85 The drops in the standard of living that have been brought about by the unfavourable economic conditions have induced a large number of highly skilled Africans to flee the African economy. This loss of skills has complicated the regions efforts at recovery and development. Measures have to be thought out and programmes put in place to arrest and reverse the trend. African Governments might wish to begin by exploiting the facilities of the Joint ECA/ICM Return of Skills Programme for Africa and by making greater use of the Directory of African Experts. They should also begin considering how to redress the skills imbalances within the region by transferring surpluses to areas

of shortage. Internal conditions of employment must be improved as a precondition of the success of any attempts to reverse the brain drain.

86 The situation confronting African Governments with regard to the utilization of human resources is bordering on the explosive. Unless urgent actions are taken to improve it, this continent should be prepared for a season of civil unrest.



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**PROGRESS IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION, PRODUCTIVITY
ENHANCEMENT AND CO-OPERATION IN THE USE OF
HIGH-LEVEL MANPOWER**

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

In the last several years, African countries registered little if any progress in employment generation, productivity enhancement and co-operation in the use of high-level manpower. This was due mainly to the pervasive economic declines caused by the crisis which Africans lived through in the first half of the 1980s and which was brought about by drought, desertification, serious food shortfalls, balance of payments problems, heavy external debt, a diminished external resource flows, a slump in commodity prices and high interest rates.

The crisis had a severe negative impact on human resources in Africa. Employment and underemployment levels soared, real incomes plummeted, increases in educational enrolments declined, the number of refugees and displaced persons shot up and the brain drain picked up momentum.

African Governments quickly came together to design action measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the economic growth and socioeconomic development prospects of the region. Collectively, they agreed on "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990" (APPER), and adopted the measures contained therein at the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU. This was followed by a call to the international community to support the African initiatives for recovery, which was made at the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in May/June 1986 and at which the international community expressed its support for APPER, in the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990" (UNPAERD). The measures for recovery and development expressed in both programmes placed topmost priority on the rehabilitation of the food and agriculture sector. Priority was also accorded to other sectors in support of agriculture, drought and desertification control and human resources. An estimated total investment outlay of US\$128.1 billion was deemed necessary to implement the UN-PAERD in the five years between 1986 and 1990, of which US\$7.2 billion will go to the development and utilization of human resources.

Alongside the regional initiatives to achieve full economic recovery were individual country efforts to put national economies back on course. Most of these efforts were supported by the major financial institutions: the IMF and the World Bank, and found expression in the many structural adjustment and stabilization programmes that have been put in place in many African countries. These programmes call for a number of financial, fiscal and economic measures to be implemented by the countries in question. They include currency devaluations, the reduction or removal of subsidies on certain essential consumer items, a reduction in government spending, cost recovery and containment in the social sectors, tax reforms, etc.

These, therefore, are the programmes on which Africa's hopes for achieving recovery are pinned. They have implications for, or are already having an effect on the utilization of human resources within the continent. An implementation of APPER and UN-PAAERD would have very salutary effects on growth within the African economy, which would stimulate the demand for labour and boost employment levels within the economy.

The measures envisaged for the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector are themselves favourable to employment generation. Afforestation programmes, soil and water conservation schemes, livestock development projects etc. could create more opportunities for labour to be gainfully employed, and at the same time would set the stage for the agricultural work force to be more productive. The investments in sectors in support of agriculture would call for increased activities in civil works projects - the construction of dams, roads, culverts, storage facilities etc. - which in themselves are highly labour-intensive. The implementation of recovery programmes in these areas will thus create a large number of rural jobs while at the same time lead to higher levels of productivity in agriculture. And the provision of seeds, fertilizer and improved production tools and implements will make agricultural production more efficient and worker productivity much higher.

In the manufacturing sector, rehabilitation of industrial enterprises has already started showing signs of success. With the greater availability of foreign exchange, it has been possible to secure more raw materials, spareparts and production inputs to raise capacity utilization in many industries. While this has certainly rendered the output of the industrial worker higher, it is not certain that it has contributed substantially to increasing the demand for labour. Albeit if output growth is sustained over the life of APPER and the UN-PAAERD, the demand for labour will, in the medium and long term, be boosted, not only within the industrial sector but also in the economy as a whole.

Although many countries that responded to an ECA survey on the implementation of APPER and UN-PAAERD reported an impressive rate of implementation of the recovery and development programmes, the evidence in terms of employment generation, productivity increases, the reversal of the brain drain and greater co-operation in the use of high-level manpower, does not appear to bear this out. Unemployment and underemployment levels are not being brought down; the brain drain has worsened due mainly to the still unfavourable socio-economic conditions prevailing and the degree of co-operation among African countries in the utilization of high-level manpower is still limited.

Conversely, the effects of structural adjustment programmes on Africa's human resources are more visible. There has been a substantial loss of investment opportunities which has constrained employment generation efforts. Those affected have been mainly the new labour force entrants, especially school leavers and, increasingly now, even university graduates. Those governments implementing structural adjustment programmes are also reducing the size of public sector employment by laying off workers and imposing a ban on new hiring. Considering that the public sector in most African countries is the largest employer, these policies have serious implications for employment creation within the African economy. As for those in the work force, conditions of work have been made more unfavourable. The value of their earnings has declined, in some cases by as much as 40% in the last five years. Real per capita income itself has been on the decline by an average annual rate of about 4.1 per cent since 1980, while the removal of subsidies on essential consumer goods and services such as transport, education and health, have further lowered the standard of living of many an African household.

On a more positive note, the supply side measures which are designed to boost production by creating the appropriate incentive packages to producers, appear to have been attaining their objective. This, added to the more favourable weather conditions since 1985 has led to an increase in agricultural production. However, it is doubtful that the currency devaluations have had any impact whatsoever on productivity increases. The curb on demand has resulted in a greater availability of foreign exchange for the procurement of production inputs, especially in the manufacturing sector, whose productivity has increased somewhat as a result.

The economic crisis and the traumas of recovery have propelled the flight of skills from African economies in the last five years. Although one of the measures for recovery is aimed at arresting the trend, some lag should be expected before these measures, if implemented at all, take effect. The brain drain will, therefore, continue or even increase in the next five years given the persistence of the present socio-economic conditions and barring the institution of restrictive measures within the continent and in the receiving countries.

The large numbers of middle- and high-level manpower that have emigrated from Africa still have a role to play in the economic development of the continent. Expatriate technical assistance employment in Africa has been growing while vacancy rates in many African countries have remained high. Shortages in some skill areas in one country can be redressed by using the surplus in these same areas from another country.

Several attempts have been made in the past to formalize co-operation in the use of high-level manpower. These include the creation by the OAU of a technical assistance bureau, the publication by ECA of a Directory of African Experts and the implementation by ECA of the Return of Skills Programme for Africa which identifies and arranges the voluntary return to jobs in Africa, of skilled Africans living in Europe and North America. However, much more needs to be done to retain within the African economy more of Africa's skilled men and women.

Proposals for Practical Measures

(i) Implementing APPER and UN-PAAERD

The investments envisaged in the implementation of the priority programmes of recovery will create several million jobs. The actions reported by member States as revealed in the ECA evaluation study should by now be decelerating the unemployment trends in African countries, but unemployment is still on the increase, probably on account of the structural adjustment and stabilization programmes taking precedence over the recovery programmes. If African countries should succeed in tackling the worsening human resources problems which they now face, they should conceive policies and programmes to dampen the effects of structural adjustment and stabilization on human resources while in no way jeopardizing the success of the recovery measures.

But African Governments must make a conscious effort to build into their recovery programme elements that would promote the creation of employment and the reduction of underemployment in all sectors, otherwise recovery will be of little immediate benefit to Africa's labour force.

(ii) Mitigating the Effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes on Human Resources Utilization and Productivity

The reductions in public sector expenditure, as advocated in the structural adjustment and stabilization measures, are starving the social and economic sectors of substantial amounts of investments. The more immediate effects of these measures on human resources have to be very seriously tackled, the deep erosions of the workers' pay package, the freeze on public sector employment, the rampant layoffs, the removal of subsidies on essential consumer items at the same time that wages are frozen. All these have far-reaching implications for the productivity of the work force, not to mention the hardships they impose on the working poor.

The demand for labour could be sustained at present levels or even increased through a programme of employment subsidies, where

employers could be paid a certain amount of money to retain workers or to hire more labour. Public work schemes should also be considered as a means of providing gainful employment to the unemployed.

(iii) Reversing the Brain Drain and Strengthening Co-operation in the Use of High-Level Manpower

Existing money incentive policies tend to favour the brain drain from Africa. The direct and the opportunity costs of the brain drain justify instituting urgent measures to reverse it by providing more attractive monetary and other incentives to the continent's skilled men and women.

Working conditions should also be improved. Equipment, tools and production inputs should be made available to production and "knowledge" workers so as to allow them to carry out their work with ease and efficiency. Intellectuals and academics should be provided a more enabling and less stressful environment, as well as the resources that would make them function with greater effectiveness.

African Governments should provide more opportunities for education and training, and increase resource allocations to the middle and higher education sector to improve the quality of teaching and learning within it. This would help to reduce the need for large numbers of Africans to seek educational opportunities abroad and would decrease the chances of a good percentage of such students staying away.

African Governments should show greater interest in participating in the Joint ECA/ICM Return of Skills Programme for Africa, for the promise it holds for assisting them in identifying highly qualified Africans in specialized fields for employment in key areas. They should also consider providing the resources required for ECA to initiate action on their behalf to create a programme for within region exchange of skilled Africans. More use ought to be made of the Directory of African Experts by Governments wishing to intensify co-operation in the use of African professionals.

(iv) Strengthening Employment Planning Capabilities

The bleak prospects facing the region in the area of employment generation to meet the demands of a growing labour force require an immediate change of attitudes to questions of employment, incomes and productivity. Unless the capability is developed so that employment creation emerges more positively as an objective of overall planning, the region will continue to be confronted with difficulties in fully utilizing its growing labour force. A permanent structure within government must be set up to monitor employment levels within industry, and generally enforce government policies on employment.